

Made A Pig's Ear Of That One

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Made A Pig's Ear Of That One

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Summary

Sapnap accidentally proposes to a piglin and discovers they take marriage very seriously.

Very seriously indeed.

Notes

In one of his streams, Sapnap joked that he wanted to marry a piglin for giving him ender pearls. Somehow that evolved into this dsfsdf

Chapter 1

He hadn't spared the words a second thought. He'd been so wrapped up in the excitement of gaining ender pearls that he'd just blurted them out. And with his friends well, it would have been taken as the joke it was, especially considering Dream and George were already a well-established item by this point.

"I love this guy! I'm gonna marry this guy!"

The piglin, who'd been busy examining the gold bar he'd thrown down to it paused and blinked up at him, ears twitching as it stared. And those white eyes were a little creepy he wasn't gonna lie. It gave a confused snort, tilting its head before slipping the gold into its inventory, eyes still trained on Sapnap as it began climbing out of the hole he'd knocked it into.

Sapnap chuckled nervously, backing up as it approached. "H-hey big guy, I have more gold if you want it? He glanced down for a second, nope he was still wearing his gold boots, and he hadn't attacked it so why was it- he jerked his head up and gulped when the piglin drew closer, towering over him. It must be at least a head taller if not more.

It snorted again and then, with a suddenness that has him stumbling back, it reached for him with both hands. He almost fell over the uneven netherrack underfoot, dropping his shield as his arms pinwheeled for balance, but was stopped by the hands gripping his armour. The piglin studied him, and up close he could see its eyes weren't fully white, it had very pale golden pupils.

Sapnap gulped and he realized how vulnerable he was, his shield was on the ground and his sword was in its sheath at his hip. The piglin drew even closer and he felt its breath on his face as it exhaled through its snout. "Dude what do you *want* ?!" He couldn't stop himself blurting out, trying to be demanding but his tone just gave away his nerves.

The piglin gave out a series of snorts, seemingly agitated. It set him back on his feet but its eyes never left his.

Sapnap blinked, shaking his head, "sorry my guy, I can't understand you, like at all." He held up his hands placatingly before he slid his leather bag off his back, reaching in for the remaining gold nuggets. "It's fine dude, you can have these, thanks for the ender pearls." Sapnap chucked them onto the ground and watched as the piglin looked over in interest.

In the moment of distraction he backed up and reached down for his shield. Okay this had been weird but now he just needed to head elsewhere and find another piglin to get the rest of the pearls. He stepped backwards and scanned the area around himself and the piglin gave a loud snort, almost a scream.

Sapnap jerked his head to see it had abandoned the gold, and if he hadn't been panicking he'd have been floored by that. He froze as his ears picked the unmistakable thuds and snorts of its brethren and Sapnap whipped his head around in panic as they surrounded him.

They grabbed him and Sapnap yelled, struggling as they wrestled away his shield and his sword, leaving him completely defenseless. The piglin, the one who started this all, is snorting and gesturing, glancing between him and the rest of the group. There's murmured little grunts and a few shriller squeals from around him and he shrinks under all their accusing stares.

There's a long pause as the piglin's grunt to each other and then he's passed to the now-familiar piglin and he yelps as he's thrown over its shoulder like a sack of potatoes. He considers kicking before he realizes two piglin brutes were in front of him, their weapons drawn and ready. "What did I do?! Come on, let me go?!" the piglin ignored his yell, one hand gripping the back of his thighs, keeping him in place.

Sapnap feels like he should be more surprised when they begin walking and he ends up gripping the thin brown leather the piglin is wearing. He's glad they left him his bag at least and haven't forced him to empty his inventory, but he feels horribly defenseless nevertheless.

They take an uneven path downwards, the piglin's hand shifts a little for a better grip and he can't help the little jerk and mortified heat that flashes through his cheeks when it rests on his ass. He would've yelled about it but there's the unmistakable and terrifying whimper of a Ghast somewhere out in the mist and he holds his breath. The large creatures don't generally attack other mobs in the Nether, but they might attack *him*.

Sapnap feels a wave of heat as they pass a large crack in the wall, lava spitting deep within it. He puffs out a breath, listening to the thuds of their feet and trying to avoid the stares of the two piglin brutes walking behind the one carrying him. He's honestly still trying to work out what he did wrong, as far as he's aware he followed all the bartering rules... wear gold, don't attack the mob and offer some gold and take the trade. And yet he'd angered them so much they'd kidnapped him?!

He barely has the time to fully register this thought before they're clambering up onto darker stone and it takes him a moment from this perspective to see they're trudging over a Bastion bridge. Sapnap sees the Ghast in the difference and grips the piglin's tunic in panic, but the large mob just glides off into the mist and he exhales in relief, "Phew."

Piglin brutes snort as they pass and he feels his stomach churn a little, he's so defenseless and if they decide to attack all he could really do is run, and he can't do that while being held. The heat of the Nether drops as they descend into the Bastion and his body shivers just a tad. It's hardly the cold shock that he feels coming from the Nether to Overworld but it's still noticeable.

Finally they pass through a door and he's set down and pushed into a chair. Sapnap blinks, feeling small as the group stand around, snorting to each other and giving him glances. He's never seen a room like this before when exploring the Nether Bastions, it reminds him of the houses of cartographers and librarians of the Overworld villagers, the walls are lined with leather-bound books and the table he finds himself sitting at is covered with parchment, the kind made from drying animal skins, and bottles of ink.

The door opens once more and the group part to let an older, wizened piglin through. He wore a furred cloak about his shoulders and shuffled slowly to the table, stepping behind it to survey the room. His eyes came to rest on Sapnap and he snorted curiously. Sapnap leaned back in the chair and felt a hand grip his shoulder. He looks up to see the familiar piglin standing beside him.

The piglin begins snorting and gesturing once more, pointing at him and the elder piglin nods along. Sapnap feels his anxiety rising, what had he done?! And then the elder piglin reaches for some parchment and begins writing slowly and Sapnap blinks in surprise as he realizes the cursive is in his own tongue. His heart races, his hands twitching as he grips his knees, he just wants to know what's going on.

The old piglin swivels the parchment and pushes it towards him so he can read with an impatient grunt and he leans over. As he read Sapnap felt his eyes getting wider and he jerks up, trying to get to his feet but the piglins around him grunt threateningly and he slumps back again. "Listen there's been a misunderstanding, I was just *joking*, you know?" he gestures desperately, trying to laugh but it comes out awkward and hollow.

The piglin next to him gives a slow squeak and it sounds oddly hurt. This is followed by angry snorts and grunts from around the room and Sapnap cowers in the chair, his arms half lifted to protect his head. The elder piglin silences them with a sweep of his arm and a shrill squeal and then he turns back to Sapnap and glares. He taps furiously on the parchment with one claw, stabbing into it and causing a tear and Sapnap swallows as he peers down, reading the words fully.

"Human, you have proposed a bond of marriage to one of our tribe. Marriage is sacred to the Piglin people, it is never an oath or proclamation to be taken lightly. For us, marriage is precious, it is usually only after a long courtship that it is ever proposed and therefore it is often a bond never broken. There may be confusion for our ways are different, but you have pledged yourself to this Piglin and you must honour it."

He chokes out a hollow bark of laughter and grips the edge of the table. “L-look I’m sorry I joked about something so important to you guys but I.. come on..” he bit his lip and gestured to the elder piglin imploringly. “I’m not ready to get married, I’m not sure if I even want-”

The older piglin squealed again and scribbled something on the parchment before holding it up in front of his face. Sapnap gulped as he read the much messier scrawl out loud, his voice trembling, “Penalty for breaking the promise for such a sacred bond is d- *death* ?!” He gaped at the elder piglin and there were affirming grunts from around the room. “Ca-can’t we work this out?”

The piglin brutes around the room grunt threateningly and brandish their weapons and the elder piglin slammed his hands on the table. He snorts again harshly, eyes shining in the dimly-lit room and Sapnap can’t help the embarrassing whimper of fear he lets out.

A hand presses to the table and the familiar piglin steps closer, creating a bit of a barrier between Sapnap and the elder piglin. His snorts and grunts are softer, placating, and they seem to soothe the older piglin a little. He huffs and his eyes move from Sapnap to the piglin and then he snorts before taking up the ink and pen once more.

Sapnap swallows as he’s passed the parchment, reading out loud once more, “uh, your husband has proposed a compromise, you will remain here for a month as his spouse and if at the end of the month your feelings remain the same, he will allow you to break the marriage bond... wait really?!” He blinked up at the familiar piglin, noticing that it (he?) had a little bite mark out of one ear, an old scar.

The piglin nods at him, his eyes sincere. Sapnap looks down at the parchment, rereading the words over and over. This is nuts... but he doesn’t have a choice. And his friends aren’t likely to come looking for him any time soon and there’s no way he can fight his way past so many of them with just the half-broken pickaxe in his bag. He sighs and meets the elder piglin’s gaze. “I accept.”

The piglin he’s now apparently married to gives a joyful squeal, gripping his shoulder and there are murmurs of approval from around them. The elder piglin grunts and nods, clapping his hands together before snorting to two piglins by the door. They start up and leave the room and Sapnap watches as the elder starts writing out a new parchment, writing slowly and deliberately.

As he finishes the last carefully swirled letter, the two piglins return to the room and approach the table. In their hands is a tiny wooden chest and they set it on the table with a thud. The elder piglin reaches into a side drawer on the side of the table and tugs out a small stone dish. He sets it on the table and carefully tips the ink bottle, allowing just a little to pool into the dish.

The elder makes another gesture at him and the piglin and Sarnap blinks a little, “huh?”

His piglin snorts and tugs the parchment towards him and ushers him to his feet. Piglins have three thick fingers and a thumb, tipped with a claw and he dips the tips of two into the ink and presses them to the paper. Sarnap swallows, finally realizing he’s signing the equivalent of a marriage certificate, and with a deep breath he follows suit, leaving a smaller fingerprint next to his husband’s.

The energy in the room seems to shift, hostility melting into approval and a few piglins snort excitedly until the rest join in. Sarnap rubs the tip of his fingers together, smudging the remaining ink, feeling his cheeks burning in confused mortification. The elder grunts approvingly before opening the tiny chest. Inside are two long needles, like those for sewing, and two gold rings. Sarnap squints at them a moment before he realizes they’re not full complete rings.

The older piglin retrieves a candle from a shelf and carefully holds each needle in the flame until the silvery metal turns black. And then he approaches them both. Sarnap isn’t prepared for the way his head is grabbed and he almost struggles before remembering what will happen if he refuses. He yelps as the elder piglin pierces his ear with the needle before gently, but firmly, slipping one of the rings into his ear.

Sarnap presses a hand to his ear, grunting in pain, “*fuck*, why man?” He can feel blood dripping a little and it stings like a bitch. He can’t help glaring at the back of the elder as he makes his piglin husband bend over and there’s a low pained snort as he pierces his ear in turn. God he hopes after all this is over he can take it out and the hole will close up.

The elder piglin steps back, surveying them both with a satisfied grunt, making his way slowly around the table once more, settling into the chair there. Sarnap jerks a little as his husband takes his free hand, his much larger fingers dwarfing his. He can’t help gulping, one hand still on his stinging ear and the weight of the situation starting to sink in, making his body shake a little.

The relative quiet, and the serious tone of the room, seems to dissipate as piglins file out, snorting and grunting to each other. His husband tugs on his hand and he stumbles a little as they follow the rest of the group. He’s been in Bastions before of course, but usually he and his friends are rushing through, he’s never slowly walked through any of the castle-like ruins.

Polished blackstone shines under the light of torches and as they ascend some stairs, Sarnap realizes he can see deep into the belly of the Bastion. Gold is stacked around rows of nether wart, softly glowing red in the dim light there. He blinks curiously as a piglin tends to the fungus, sprinkling bonemeal over them. He had no idea there were piglin farmers like the Overworld

villagers.

His husband huffs suddenly and moves to his side and he feels his stomach clench as they pass a stable of hoglins. They grunt and squeal at him, bashing against the fences threateningly and he holds his breath until they're out of the creatures' sight, his heart thudding in his chest. There's a little squeeze at his hand and without really thinking about it he gives a tiny grateful squeeze back. The last time he was in the Nether with his friends, he'd ended up with a broken rib from one of those things and he feels a phantom pain in his chest at the memory.

Sapnap's distracted as they pass a few open doorways, piglins and piglin brutes busy with different tasks inside. It reminds him of an Overworld village, though there seems to be more bickering. He jumps a little at the loud clanging as they pass a room of stone masons, the piglins' hands covered in a fine dark-grey powder from the blackstone they're working on.

They pass before he can really get a good look, but he can't help his curiosity. It's well known only piglins create polished blackstone and guard the secret of it from those in the Overworld. Maybe he can at least learn some valuable information to share with his friends after this is over. The group dwindles a little as various piglins disappear into the rooms, until it's just him, his husband and a couple who are comparing items from their inventory together as they walk.

Finally after they round a corner they come to another door and Sapnap lets himself be tugged inside. It's a room with bare blackstone walls as the others had been, but it's hung with hammocks, giving the room a cramped feel. Around the edges of the room are chests with locks, neatly stacked beside one another.

He finds himself ushered into a corner and he watches the pair of piglins across the room, unlocking two chests and snorting enviously at each other. Sapnap jerks as the chest next to him creaks and he watches his piglin husband dig through the contents. Now that he's finally got a little space to think, he realizes he feels exhausted. Maybe it's the shock of everything, or just the fact he's been in the Nether likely for almost two days without sleeping. With a soft exhale he sits down on a closed chest behind him, yawning as he watches the piglin remove a potion bottle and a clean cloth out of the chest.

Sapnap squinted at the bottle, assessing the glowing fluid swirling within sleepily. A healing potion? His husband taps a claw on the glass and gives a soft grunt and Sapnap can't help the questioning noise he makes. His husband seems to chuckle, a soft rhythmic snorting sound before he uncorks the potion and soaks a little into the cloth.

He can't help jerking just a little when the piglin reaches for him and uses a hand to gently tilt his head to the side. "Uh, what are you-?" he cuts off with a hiss of pain as the cloth is pressed to his newly pierced ear. Large hands very gently soothe the stinging and puffiness around the wound,

and he shivers as his husband uses the potion to clear the dried blood from his skin, the magic leaving little tingles in its wake.

The piglin cocks his head, assessing his work and Sapnap shivers when his large thumb strokes, feather light, around the shell of his ear. “Thanks,” he’s embarrassed by the slight shake in his voice. His husband draws back a little with a soft pleased grunt and he turns to start setting the items back in the chest. Sapnap blinks, a little sleepily, before noticing they’re being watched by the piglins across the room, he averts his eyes as they stare, feeling uncomfortable at the scrutiny.

It seems to take them all by surprise when a bell rings out. It reminds Sapnap of the ones in Overworld villages, except louder somehow, and seems to reverberate around the whole bastion. There are distant squeals and grunts and the sound of piglins moving. Slowly piglins start filing into the room, and Sapnap can’t help jumping to his feet, feeling outnumbered and nervous, before his husband pats his shoulder and gestures to the closest hammock.

There’s grunts and snorts and rustling as the rest of the room clamber into the hammocks around the room. Some kick off their boots and leave them on the floor, others just keep them on as they bed down. With how warm the Nether is, few of the mob have blankets.

Oh... that made sense. He’d never really considered how time worked in the Nether, where there was no day or night, nor changing seasons, and clocks would spin uselessly. When visiting, Overworlders couldn’t rest in the Nether safely, it was always a brief trip before returning back through a portal. It would make sense that mobs such as piglins might have designated times for rest, to create a day and night for themselves.

He’s still not expecting when his husband suddenly scoops him up. “Hey wait!” The piglin ignores his struggling and offended yelp, and rolls into the closest hammock. Sapnap splutters indignantly from where he’s pressed against the piglin’s chest, his face flushing against his will. “Can’t I have my own hammock, dude?” he cranes his head up and shoots his husband a quizzical stare.

He receives a rather bemused look in return and then the piglin directs his gaze to the hammock next to theirs and Sapnap looks over to see two piglins snuggling together... and his eyes widen when he notices their matching gold earrings. “Oh.” He takes a minute to gaze around the room, noticing piglins snorting softly to one another from their hammocks. Most have their own hammock or are laying head to toe, there’s only one other married couple, a piglin brute softly nuzzling the head of his smaller piglin partner.

It’s odd to see how universal romantic affection is, it reminds him of his friends suddenly. He feels guilty for feeling like a third wheel around them sometimes. He’d give a lot to have them here now though, even if they’d roast him for getting into such a ridiculous situation. He’s tugged from his thoughts when a hand presses to his back and begins gently petting.

Sapnap lifts his head a little, ready to tell his husband to stop stroking his back like some kind of pet but he pauses. The piglin is yawning and his pale eyes are heavy with sleep when it regards him and he finds the yawn is contagious. He's too tired for this and comfy and warm and Sapnap lets his head flop down. The rise and fall of his husband's chest is oddly soothing and his eyes slide shut.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone, I'm so incredibly sorry for such a long wait between chapters. Last month was a little stressful for me and I ended up with a terrible case of writer's block. Thank you all for your lovely comments, kudos and bookmarks, I can't tell you how much I appreciate them all and how they always bring a smile to my face ^v^

Sapnap didn't know where he was when he woke up. He was jerked awake by an unfamiliar bell ringing out and would have jumped out of bed, had something not been holding him down. He blinked at the Piglin beneath him, completely frozen and trying to sleepily puzzle out what was going on before his mind finally remembered the previous day's events. The piglin regards him back, his eyes hazy with sleep, one arm still wrapped around his back.

Sapnap flinches just a little as his new husband's large hand reaches up but all the piglin does is gently touch his ear, the clawed thumb stroking the gold ring and he feels an odd flutter in his stomach at the fondness in the larger male's gaze.

The moment is broken by a loud grunt from across the room and Sapnap is suddenly reminded they're very much not alone. The piglins around the room are stretching and rolling out of their hammocks, all yawns and rubbing eyes sleepily. He suddenly feels incredibly unconscious and tries to move to the side. But he's never slept in a hammock before or tried to get out of one and it proves to be a little difficult to coordinate.

He yelps when he falls onto the blackstone floor with a bump, the impact sending jarring pain through his ass and lower back. Sapnap hisses as he reaches a hand down to rub the affected area, going bright red when he realizes the entire room is staring at him. There's a shuffle of fabric and a soft thump behind him and he turns to find his piglin husband standing behind him and holding out a hand.

"I can get up on my own you know." He knows that's probably a little rude to blurt out, but he feels mortified and there's grunted laughter from someone else across the room. The piglin just gives him an amused look and continues to hold out his hand patiently. Sapnap sighs and takes it, allowing the taller male to tug him to his feet.

The room seems to return back to the routine the piglins have in their 'mornings', the mob opening chests and retrieving tools before heading out of the door in pairs and groups. Sapnap notices one of the other married couples rubbing snouts in a little loving nuzzle across the room and he turns

before they notice. His husband is digging through his own chest, throwing a thick leather apron over his shoulder, followed by two hardy-looking leather gloves. Sapnap tilts his head curiously, fiddling with his hair. He's sure it must be a ruffled mess. He rearranges the bandana self-consciously.

His husband straightens once more, rolling the bundle of leather garments under one arm and turns to him, gazing down with an inscrutable look. And then his gaze softens when Sapnap's stomach rumbles and one hand reaches to his lower back. He lets the piglin steer him towards the doorway with an embarrassed chuckle, "okay okay, we're going?" All he gets is a soft grunt in response.

They go in another direction than the day before, and Sapnap is honestly glad he doesn't have to pass the hoglin pen again, and also a little intimidated by how maze-like the Bastion is. If he's left alone he's pretty sure he's gonna end up completely lost. He lets his husband guide him down a narrow spiral staircase until they reach another corridor. There's a hole in the wall, like a gaping maw, blasting them with heat as they pass. Sapnap looks out into a small lake of lava, watching a group of striders making their way across the bubbling pool. He wipes the beading sweat from his brow and notices they're approaching a large door.

He's not expecting the vast room they find themselves in, the walls a mixture of basalt and blackstone and lined with long tables crafted from crimson fungi. The hall is filled with the snorts and squeals of piglins and the scent of mushroom stew as the mob sit around eating and talking with one another. Sapnap's stomach rumbles again and he hears his husband's snorting laughter, the taller male leading him towards one of the tables.

He can't help shrinking a little at the curious glances directed at him from several piglins already seated as he's herded onto a long bench, sandwiched between his husband and a towering piglin brute. Sapnap feels a slight flash of fear when he sneaks a glance and sees the brute is missing an entire eye and half his ear, but the piglin doesn't spare him a glance, sipping his stew straight from his bowl and appearing lost to the world.

A steaming bowl is passed to him by a piglin walking between the tables with a huge saucepan. Sapnap nods his head awkwardly, hoping that comes off as polite, "uh, thanks." Damn he has to restrain himself from immediately grabbing the dish to chug it. A voice in the back of his head reminds him he's technically surrounded by potential enemies so he should be wary of eating their food, but he's hungry and it smells good.

Nevertheless he takes a minute to blow on the steaming stew and peeks to the side to see his husband slurping his own breakfast with a spoon. His eyes rest on the thick fingers clutching the spoon almost delicately and his mind flashes back inexplicably to earlier when those fingertips had been gently petting his ear. His cheeks flush and he's honestly grateful when his stomach distracts him with another demanding growl and he lifts the bowl to drink.

The stew is good, he's had it before with Dream and George in the Overworld, but there's more depth to it. Sapnap slurps more and focuses on the flavor. He can detect a little saltiness, an odd beefiness, and it occurs to him that they might have used hoglin-pork stock to add some extra protein. It's not an unwelcome addition and he can't help the satisfied little moan as he drains the bowl.

Sapnap wipes his mouth on his sleeve and notices his husband setting down his own empty bowl. His clawed fingers tap on the table surface and he tilts his head as another piglin across the table huffs and snorts, seeming to ask a question. His husband glances towards Sapnap and one hand creeps up to his pierced ear to fiddle with the gold ring as he snorts back. The piglins across the table shoot him some bemused glances but they don't seem hostile.

Sapnap sinks into the bench a little self-consciously. He's not the best with reading people, George and Dream are better with that. A hand presses to his shoulder and he turns to find his husband looking down at him, gesturing with his head that they should leave.

xxxxx

Sapnap feels like he should have expected that his husband was a toolsmith. The heavy leather of his work clothes had certainly pointed to something laborious, and a fair bit hazardous. The room he finds himself in is clustered with a large forge and chimney (that he supposes leads out to the side of the Bastion) and a smoothing table, grindstone and blast furnace. And battered iron shelving stacked with tools and metal rods and pieces.

It smells of molten metal and smoke, two piglins are already hard at work, also wearing the thick leather garments and stoking heat into the hearth, the coals turning to a blistering red. He's visited toolsmiths' smithies in the Overworld before but he can't deny he's never really spent time watching them work.

He follows his husband as he tugs on his apron and gloves and walks towards the shelves and a low bench pressed against the wall. It's covered in grubby cloths but the piglin shoves them aside a little to make some room. He gestures at the space, indicating Sapnap should sit. Sapnap sits and he leans back against the cold stone of the wall as he watches his husband begin work. It is interesting to see the piglins discuss and work, he's honestly not sure how they can even hear each other over the clanging metal and the roar of the fire.

Of course he's never been the most patient person and after a while it becomes boring just to sit and watch. He fiddles with his bandana, his pants, unties and reties his laces, and then his eyes fall

to the shelves beside him. Sapnap starts fiddling, examining small rough sheets of metal, and part-worked pieces.

At first he just leans from the bench until eventually he ends up standing. He's not been told he can touch but he's bored. Most of the metal is iron, there's some gold and even sliced stone. He's had weapons of all of them before of course but it's fascinating to touch the raw materials and fully examine them. There's a clang from behind him and Sapnap accidentally knocks a pile of tools. They fall to the floor and the resulting cacophony makes him jump.

One of the other piglins squeals angrily and Sapnap blurts an apology, squatting down to gather up the tools. He keeps dropping some in his haste, face red in embarrassment. A shadow falls over him and he looks up to the familiar sight of his husband. The piglin kneels down and helps him collect the tools, his face is smudged with the dark powder that comes from grinding metal. Sapnap drags his gaze away and hefts the hefty bundle of tools in his arms back up onto the shelf.

The two other toolsmiths seem to be bickering and they gesture to him angrily. Sapnap backs up a little, he really *really* doesn't like being unarmed. His husband snarls back, moving to stand in front of him, gloved hands on his hips. When the others don't back down however, Sapnap sees his shoulders slump and he turns to him, larger hand taking his.

The press of the weathered leather is rough against his skin as he's tugged towards the door. "Those dudes want me to wait outside huh? What the heck bro? I'm hurt." There's no heat to the words though and his husband's lips quirk up a little as he shrugs, his chest shaking with those little grunting chuckles. "Who're you laughing at? I have been wronged!" Sapnap finds himself grinning too, rolling his eyes and stuffing his hands into his pockets. "So I guess I gotta go be busy elsewhere until later huh?"

His husband seems to frown and his hand reaches out to pat his head. Sapnap ducks a little with an awkward laugh. God this guy was so tactile, he's really not used to it. There's a soft grunt before the piglin nods and Sapnap sighs, he has no idea what he's gonna do on his own. "You'll come find me later yeah? I think I'm gonna end up getting lost," he looks around, "probably."

The piglin snorts amusedly and pats his shoulder before turning back to the doorway. Sapnap watches as he returns back to his work before sighing a little and shuffling down the hallway. He doesn't know where he's going, he feels like he shouldn't go too far. There's another hole in the wall, a smaller one this time and he hovers a little, looking out into the Nether. The sound of a Ghast has him whipping back inside though, hand reaching for the bow that just isn't there.

He hears high-pitched snorts and squeals coming from ahead and creeps on curiously. As he turns the corner he finds the source. There's a group of five baby piglins playing in the narrow space of the hallway. One has another on their shoulders, wobbling from the weight. The others have a

collection of chalk pieces and are drawing all over the blackstone of the floor.

Sapnap smiles and squats down to their level, “hey, what you got there?” The children look at him curiously, pausing in their scribbling. The sudden scrutiny makes him balk a little, especially when one of the baby piglins stands and walks towards him. They press their clawed fingers, featherlight to his hoodie over his collarbone, before darting back shyly. He can’t help the little laugh of surprise that bursts out of him.

He doesn’t want to scare them so he cautiously reaches down to an abandoned stick of chalk on the floor and turns to the wall closest to him, whistling in exaggerated nonchalance. He starts sketching a rather crude drawing of a horse. Back in the Overworld he’d had a rather handsome chestnut spotted horse... well until he’d been caught in a raid. He shudders at that thought and starts adding grass and trees to his picture.

For a few minutes the baby piglins remain quiet and watch him, soft shuffles and breaths indicating they’re creeping a little closer to peep. And then one toddles over to kneel next to him, snorting curiously. Sapnap feels a smile tug at his lips and he attempts a tiny chicken. “This is a chicken,” he turns to find the piglin tilting their head, “it sounds like-” he makes a chicken noise.

Another baby piglin squeezes through the tiny gap between him and the child next to him, squeaking questioningly and pointing to the horse. Sapnap laughs, “yeah that’s a horse, they’re in the Overworld... and this is a sheep!” He doodles a blobby sheep. “They’re covered in fluffy wool which we shear off and turn into beds and clothes,” he tugs at the front of his hoodie with a grin and turns back to the wall to draw a very crude rendition of the house he built from wood.

The baby piglins seem absolutely fascinated by everything he says and draws and it spurs him on to keep sketching, telling them all about the Overworld. He continues sketching, explaining about the different mobs that come out at night and when the little piglins snort curiously he goes on to explain night and day, drawing a sun and stars.

“I couldn’t draw enough stars though, they’re like... tiny twinkling lights in the sky? Thousands and thousands of them. And of course there’s the moon which changes too, it moves across the sky and then disappears when the sun rises, bringing light to the world.” He’s kneeling now, after his calves had started protesting the squatting position, and the children are gathered around him, completely absorbed in his every word.

Sapnap is halfway through drawing the ocean, describing a time he and his friends were hunting for sunken ships when he hears thudding footsteps and there’s a tap on his shoulder. He whirls around to find legs behind him. He tilts his head up to find the familiar face of his husband. The piglin looks between the group of baby piglins, him and his embarrassingly bad scribbles.

Sapnap chuckles awkwardly and passes what remains of the chalk stick, now more of a stub, to the closest child's hand. "Hey there big guy, uh, these aren't... mine?" The piglin makes one of his little snorting laughs and kneels down to join him. His large clawed fingertip points to the half-drawn ocean, his head tilting curiously.

"Oh that? That's supposed to be the ocean, it's a huge uh... well you know you have those giant pools of lava that seem to go on forever?" Sapnap wracks his mind for how to explain the sea to someone who lives in the *Nether*. His husband nods, and Sapnap notices his ears twitching a little and he tries to ignore the sudden thought of how adorable that is. "It's kind of like that I guess? Except it's deep water, so deep and dark you can't see the bottom, and it's full of creatures that can breathe underwater."

This piglin snorts a little, his gaze shifting between the drawings and Sapnap's face, seeming fascinated. And then the baby piglins toddle closer, three of them now balancing on each other's shoulders and wobbling precariously. They begin to lose balance with worried squeals and his husband reaches out to catch them, the children tumbling into his lap with squeaks and snorts and ending up in a heap.

Sapnap can't hold in the bark of laughter, "watch out, it's raining piglins!" His husband gives him a questioning glance, hands busy setting the baby piglins back on their feet. He realizes once more that weather would be another alien concept. "Oh... rain is something from the Overworld, when water drops from the sky."

The piglin shakes his head with a bemused huff and pats his head before gesturing to the hallway. He mimes pressing his hand to his mouth and then rubbing his stomach.

As if on cue, Sapnap registers just how hungry he is, and also with how much his shoulders and back are aching. He glances around at the walls, they're covered in his drawings of the Overworld (which the baby piglins are now adding little scribbles to). He must have been at this for hours. "Yeah, I could eat dude."

He's a little worried with how natural it's becoming having the piglin take his hand and lead him around. He turns to wave at the baby piglins with his free hand, "see you later kiddos." A few wave back with little joyful squeaks.

His husband entwines their fingers and Sapnap feels his stomach give a little jolt. The piglin's hand really dwarfs his. His grip is so gentle, even though Sapnap knows he's probably strong as heck, he'd flung him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes the day before with ease. He's grateful when they approach the familiar doors to the dining hall for the distraction, his thoughts were

getting a little... weird.

And damn, the scent of roasted hoglin is making his mouth water.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

I'm so incredibly sorry for the long wait everyone, thank you all for the kudos and comments! I'll try to get better at posting more regularly than once a month!

Just wondering, how do y'all feel about me bending the game mechanics of Minecraft? There's some suggestions I've had that would require me ignoring certain in-game mechanics (-cough- such as piglins visiting the Overworld)

****Forewarning****: there is smut in this chapter, it's not super graphic but it is plot-relevant. I'll give heads up at the start of the chapters with smut in them

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A week passes and Sapnap feels himself adjusting to the mob's routine, more or less. At first he spends much of the day exploring the Bastion and drawing a map. There are more sleeping quarters on the level that he and his husband sleep on (and he can't help finding the realization the baby piglins all share a hammock together absolutely adorable). The structure is huge; he discovers bathrooms, another forge, a curing chamber, a kitchen, an apothecary and a library near the elder piglin leader's room. He hasn't even ventured much deeper down and yet he knows there must be more hidden away.

There's only been one room he hasn't been able to enter. It was tucked down a hallway as they passed, his husband showing him an alternate route to the dining hall, and he'd asked what it was. It stuck out curiously both from the fact it was oddly isolated and because there was a marking in the wood of the door.

Much to his surprise, the piglin had stiffened and rubbed the back of his neck. His snorted reply had been oddly strained and he'd taken his hand, tugging him along. If it had been an effort to distract him it had kind of failed, it just raised his curiosity. But he'd left it as his husband seemed oddly shy and uncomfortable and Sapnap knew he wasn't always aware when people were dropping hints, but he could take this one.

For the most part there was a general routine, similar to Overworld villages. Most adult piglins had some kind of profession, although the community took turns with certain tasks and activities. He eats breakfast with his husband before walking with him to the forge and then he adds more to his

map or heads towards the library.

The piglin librarian had seemed rather wary of him the first time he wandered in but now seems to tolerate his presence. He's never seen a library like this before, it's a maze of shelves which extend from basalt floor to blackstone ceiling. Every shelf is stuffed full of books and scrolls of parchment, some of which seem truly ancient, with the exception of the lowest shelves.

At first he hadn't understood what the padded mats rolled neatly on every lower shelf had been for. He'd sat on the hard floor to read until the librarian had huffed and tugged one out for him, patting it firmly to indicate he should sit. Sapnap had been momentarily distracted by the gold ring in the librarian's ear glinting under the light of the lanterns before he'd grinned and thanked the piglin. He'd rolled his golden eyes and gone back to his lectern to work, leaving him to it.

Since then the place has become a destination he frequents almost daily. It's quiet and the mats are soft and while he's never been a big reader (after all, books are hard to come by in the Overworld), they're a pleasant way to pass the hours. And piglin literature is interesting; there's all the more practical books of masonry, smithing, fletching, the uses of the few fauna and flora of the Nether and older texts that delve into history.

Some of it goes right over his head and a lot of the older texts are just too archaic or a mixture of what must be the written piglin language which is just lost on him completely. Still he feels like he's working some things out. George and Dream would probably be shocked to see him sitting quietly and reading. He's always been more of a learner by doing. Sapnap chuckles to himself, to be fair they'd be shocked by the whole situation he's landed himself in.

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Sapnap can't deny he really enjoys spending time with his husband. Mostly it's around meal times, and before and after the piglin starts his tool smithing shift. He's still not always certain what the piglin is trying to convey but the taller male is always so patient and tries to use gestures to explain. And he listens in a way Sapnap just isn't used to. George and Dream sometimes get a little lost in one another when talking, or devolve into ribbing on him.

His piglin husband just listens attentively as he rambles, even if it's something dumb. And his snorting chuckles are really growing on him. If Sapnap acts more of a fool sometimes to elicit more of them that's his own business. He also really likes the way the piglin says his name, two sharp snorts that have an 'ah-ah' sound. Sapnap would love to know if his husband has a name but there's a chance it's not something translatable into writing. Sometimes the piglin explains things in writing that are just too complex for gestures.

He discovers his husband's favorite meal is slow-roasted strider when the piglin had squealed rather adorably when they were served bowls of the steaming dish one evening meal. At first he'd balked at trying it, recognizing the redness of the meat. But it did smell good, in a weird way, he'd never smelled anything quite like it. It was seasoned with nether roots that had a peppery flavor and the meat was so tender it practically melted on his tongue. Sapnap couldn't stop the pleased moan he made and he gobbled it down, praying it wasn't actually poisonous to humans. He'd survived the night so either it wasn't poisonous or he just happened to have an iron stomach.

Sapnap finds he actually really misses the piglin when he's at work in the forge. He needs to keep busy or he gets bored easily and people are always a good distraction. The library helps, exploring helps and sometimes he finds the gaggle of baby piglins and spends hours amusing them. Sometimes he sits by a hole in the Bastion wall, gazing out into the lava lakes and mist and misses the sun and the stars.

One day he doesn't see his husband. They go to breakfast together as usual, but when the bell rings for lunch and Sapnap hurries from the library to the dining hall, he doesn't see the piglin anywhere. Still the group of piglins at the table they usually sit with scooch over and pat the bench for him. He casts his gaze about the room, stomach clenching as he eats and almost unconsciously he finds his free hand fiddling with his pierced ear.

He doesn't see the piglin at dinner either and his stomach feels even worse. He pushes the stew about in his bowl, trying to think if there's a reason his husband might be avoiding him. Sapnap can't think of anything, they'd woken up intertwined in their hammock as usual and gone to the morning meal as normal. His husband had given him a fond look and ruffled his hair before heading into the forge as he was wont to do (and Sapnap is going to pretend that those touches don't send a flutter through him). There was nothing out of the ordinary, or at least what has become ordinary.

He sighs and heads to the bedroom when the night bell rings. And then his worry flares into a panic when he doesn't find his husband there. He can't help whispering under his breath, peering down the hallway in worry, "where the hell are you dude?" With another glance around at the room, the other piglins clambering into their hammocks and giving him confused looks, he leaves the room again.

Sapnap feels like he should have twigged that his husband might still be in the forge. To his credit it's the first place he thinks to look. The Bastion is quiet with most piglins already settled down for sleep. Only a few piglin brutes are stationed around to protect the structure. They eye him as he passes but he thinks it's more curious than the wary hostility they'd radiated towards him when he'd first arrived.

The forge doorway is open as he rounds the corner and he peers inside. The fire is doused, tools laid out for the coming day. Only the worktable is lit in fact, candles flickering and casting pools of golden light over the single remaining piglin in the room. His husband is hunched over a large piece of parchment which nearly covers the entire table surface, eyes squinting as he scribbles and snorts very softly to himself.

Sapnap raises an eyebrow and knocks on the doorframe. The piglin doesn't react, seemingly lost in thought as he scratches his ear with gloved fingers and snarling as he scratches off something on the paper. With a bemused huff, Sapnap walks in and sidles closer until he's at his husband's side. The piglin is working on some detailed blueprints of the Bastion and plans for a... drawbridge? "Hey."

The piglin jumps and whirls around with a startled squeal, almost knocking over everything strewn over the table. He blinks down at Sapnap for a long moment, before he peers about the room and he stiffens. A short snort of surprise follows as he seemingly notices how late it must be.

"I was wondering where you were dude, have you eaten today like, at all?" Sapnap leans against the table and yawns, hands snug in his hoodie pockets. He watches as his husband mirrors the yawn, rubbing his eyes with the back of his forearm. The piglin shrugs, averting his gaze and then the taller male's stomach rumbles. "I knew it! Okay we're getting you some supper and then you're coming to bed."

The piglin glances towards the blueprints once more, huffing out an annoyed breath as his gloved fingers tap the table. He yawns again, a longer one this time and blinks sleepily.

"Hey no way dude, you're exhausted. Look this can wait until tomorrow yeah?" Sapnap puts on his best convincing tone, with a slight pleading edge that tends to either have George and Dream do what he wants or tell him to fuck off, it's a 50/50 chance. "Maybe you can tell me about it tomorrow? It looks pretty cool." He watches the piglin sigh and lean down to blow out the candles and manages not to pump his fist in triumph.

His husband still seems hesitant as he leads him down towards the kitchen. "Come on, live a little, we won't get caught!... Probably." Sapnap grins up at him, he likes causing a little mischief now and then. It's something he and his friends get up to a lot and he'd certainly consider the piglin a friend at this point.

He's only been in the kitchen once before but his husband seems more familiar, if a little wary. It feels like they're children sneaking a midnight snack and Sapnap can't help giggling a bit as he follows the piglin past the stoves, cauldrons and a huge iron fireplace hung with all manner of saucepans, towards another door. It leads to a narrow pantry, shelves stocked with baskets of mushrooms, dried roots, vines and cured and dried meat.

He nudges his husband and yawns into his hand, “come on, you can have a little snack and then we’ll get some rest.”

The piglin snorts a little, before he reaches for some of the cured meat, he offers a strip to Sapnap but he waves it off. “Nah thanks I’m good, I ate dinner.”

He amuses himself by inspecting the shelves as his husband munches. By Overworld standards the pantry hasn’t much choice, but he’s honestly impressed by how much the piglins have found in the Nether. He’d never had thought to try the vines, roots or sprouts. And certainly not striders but then the lava-inhabiting mob is the most like the cows, sheep and pigs in the Overworld. He finds a huge leather sack of salt* and blinks at it curiously before the piglin taps his shoulder to get his attention.

They leave the pantry as they found it (well sans a few strips of meat) and creep back to their hammock, tiptoeing past the slumbering piglins to their corner. Sapnap notices his sleepy husband struggling with his gloves and lets out a breathy laugh before reaching to help. He sets them in the chest and coaxes the yawning piglin to lean down so he can help him slip off the heavy work apron, rolling it as neatly as he can because he’s too tired to fold it.

The piglin blinks and clumsily closes the chest before reaching for him. Sapnap doesn’t even think twice before letting himself be tugged into their hammock, shifting sleepily in the taller male’s arms as he drifts off.

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There seems to be one day a week where the piglins take the afternoon off, abandoning all work for the next day to indulge in recreational activities. The majority of the mob meet in the dining hall, some sitting at the tables and others lounging around the fireplace as they talk in their own tongue. Sapnap spent the first of these afternoons half-hiding behind his husband and trying to avoid the wary looks he was receiving.

As the second one of these afternoons rolls around, he finds the piglins have mellowed to his presence and he observes the room curiously, sipping a steaming cup of twisting vines tea. It has a soothing mint-like flavor, although he can taste slight bitterness on his tongue. It occurs to him that the piglins might go absolutely (excuse the pun) hog-wild for sugar, as the sweet ingredient doesn’t exist in the Nether.

On one table there's a group of piglins trading the contents of their inventory, haggling competitively in loud snorts and squeals. A gold sword is brought out and there's a flurry of excitement, the owner snorting with laughter and teasingly shaking his head at every offered item the others produce, leaning back and crossing his arms as the rest of the table begin arguing.

On the other end of their table, two piglins are deeply invested in some kind of game. Sapnap leans a little closer to see. The game board is crafted from bone or perhaps hoglin tusk, a square shallow box with deep grooves carved into the surface. They crisscross, the entire surface divided into neat squares. And the pair have a collection of flat round stones, likely carved and polished from basalt, and each painted with the face of a piglin, hoglin or wither skeleton.

They're set out on each side of the board like an army. Sapnap takes another long sip and watches as a piglin stone is pushed forwards across the board. The other piglin taps on the table top, assessing his own stone set and he pushes a wither skeleton forwards. There's an amused huff as he shoves it into the piglin stone, sending it flying off the board. His opponent snarls, snorting out angrily and leaning to grab the lost stone. They continue with the game, which ends in victory when the opposing piglin gets their stones to the other side.

Sapnap turns to find his husband deep in conversation with two piglins he recognizes as the two toolsmiths he works with in the forge. The piglin's ears are twitching as he snorts animatedly, seeming excited and Sapnap feels a fond flutter in his stomach, he's very... cute. He feels his cheeks flush and he turns to distract himself, watching the familiar group of baby piglins near the fireplace.

Watched over intently by two hulking piglin brutes, the children are making shadows on the floor in the light of the crackling flames, trying to make shapes with their little hands. They're babbling excitedly to the adult piglins, two of them abandoning the shadow puppetry entirely and ending up play-wrestling on the rug. Sapnap wheezes out a little laugh as they roll and nibble on each other's ears. He takes a quick glance back at his husband, who's thankfully still engaged in conversation and takes a good look at the bite in his ear. He wonders if he also liked to wrestle as a little one. It's hard to imagine the tall piglin ever being so tiny.

A bell rings out and the piglins cheer as the evening meal is served. Sapnap meets his husband's eyes as the taller male passes him a plate of crispy pork crackling and roasted mushrooms. His stomach flutters again at the soft fondness in the piglin's eyes and he grins a little awkwardly, averting his gaze after thanking him. He feels his husband's hand brush his and he swallows, his cheeks flushing with heat. Sapnap notices one of the toolsmiths giving him a rather knowing look from across the table and he tries to focus on his meal, cheeks feeling redder than they ever have before.

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Later that night he just can't sleep, he's hyper aware of the rise and fall of his husband's chest as he breathes, deep in sleep. The room isn't pitch dark, there's always a couple of torches burning, casting dim light around the room. Sapnap shifts a little, wishing he could toss and turn like he would in his bed in the Overworld, but he doesn't want to disturb the piglin.

He cranes his head, his husband has his head thrown back, one arm curled above his head in the scrunched leather of the hammock, pulled taught from where it's hanging. Maybe, if he's very very careful, he can wiggle out and go for a little walk to clear his head? Or at least tire him out enough to sleep.

He attempts to roll to the side of the hammock and the arm around him briefly tightens a little, the piglin snuffling sleepily, a questioning mumble that rumbles through his chest. Sapnap extracts himself from his hold and pats his shoulder. His voice is a whisper as he reassures him, "hey I'm just using the bathroom. I'll be right back, you can go back to sleep dude."

The piglin murmurs again, eyes cracking open just a little, and Sapnap can't help finding him half-asleep absolutely adorable. He wiggles himself over and clumsily drops out of the hammock. "I'll be right back." His husband yawns and nods, snuggling back into the hammock as his eyes close.

Sapnap rubs his own eyes as he wanders the halls, shivering just a little. More from exhaustion than cold as the Bastion is always warm. He avoids the hoglin pen as usual, though at this time the violent mob tend to be sleeping themselves, and makes his way to the bathroom.

He doesn't need to use it but washing the sweat off his face and neck would help him feel more refreshed at least. In the bathrooms there are iron cauldrons that serve as basins, the water replenished daily. He leans over and scrubs his face with some of the water, splashing the back of his neck. The water isn't cool like it would be in the Overworld, as with everything else it's naturally warm but he's growing used to it.

Fiddling with his bandana he yawns and goes back to his wandering. A pair of piglin brutes nod at him as he passes and he gives them a sleepy wave, yawning midway through a 's'up'. He's not really sure where he's going, the library will be closed, as will the archery range he'd discovered on the roof of the Bastion the other day. He fully intended to ask if he could use it and show off his skills, he *was* really good with a bow if he said so himself.

Almost without thinking he ends up in the corridor with the one door he's not been allowed inside. His curiosity rises and he chances a glance around him. Surely it wouldn't hurt just to peek? What could they be hiding that was bad for him to see anyway? He grips the doorknob and blinks in actual surprise when it turns. Well the door isn't *locked* after all...

In retrospect Sapnap is very impressed by how the heavy door managed to muffle sound, he doesn't hear the snorting moans and whines until he's stuck his whole head through to peek. He freezes, hand still gripping the doorknob, eyes widening as he takes in the entwined pair across the room.

He thinks it might be the piglin and piglin brute married couple that share sleeping quarters with his husband and him. The room is lit by candles, casting a soft warm glow around the space. There is an almost-nest of thick hoglin hides and laying back on them is the smaller piglin, legs and arms wrapped around his mate as they rock slowly together.

Sapnap manages to hold back a gasp, feeling his face burn but he can't seem to move, his legs locking up. With some luck they're too lost in one another to notice him, even the sound of the door opening. The two piglin nuzzle one another, the larger brute rolling his hips into his smaller partner and making him squeal.

The piglin brute's shorts are rolled down enough to let Sapnap see his corkscrew tail, twitching a little as he thrusts. Clawed fingers tug up the back of the brute's tunic, scratching his back as the smaller piglin moans. He can't see much from this angle, but he thinks the piglin below is naked, pale skin glowing a little in the candlelight.

Sapnap swallows a little, mouth falling open as the two piglins move a little faster, their mouths meeting in a loving kiss. It's so... soft and intimate. The brute groans and sneaks his hand to wrap around his smaller partner's cock, though Sapnap can't really see clearly as it's hidden between their bodies, pressed so close together. The smaller piglin arches and whimpers, claws digging into the brute's back-

Oh fuck he's a pervert, standing and watching and- Sapnap manages to jerk himself backwards, biting his lip as he carefully, oh so very carefully, closes the door and backs up. His whole body feels aflame and he can't get the image out of his mind, his ears straining to see if he can still hear those needy sounds against his will. And then guilt lashes through his gut, like an icy wave and he swallows again, stumbling backwards out of the corridor.

He rushes through the hallways, mind awl with shame and a muddle of other things he's not even sure how to process. Sapnap pauses, heart racing, he doesn't want to go back to their hammock, he doesn't think he can cope with being pressed against his husband right now, he feels almost sick.

He shouldn't have opened the door, he invaded their privacy, of course a communal living space would have a private space for sex, that made perfect sense. God he was such an idiot and such a

pervert for standing there and *watching* .

Sapnap turns and makes his way towards the library, a sour taste in his mouth as his gut churns with shame. He thanks whatever deity is out there that the librarian doesn't lock it and sneaks inside. He feels like a zombie as he tugs out a mat and lays down, trying to not think.

He's not innocent; he loves making dirty jokes, and he's enjoyed listening to the dirty stories people share around campfires when his friends and him travel. But he's never *seen* it and he's not done anything more than share a few joke-y kisses. The image of his piglin husband straddling him like that suddenly flashes through his mind and he yelps, blushing anew and pressing the heel of his hands into his eyes, hard enough to hurt. What the hell is wrong with him?

Sapnap scrubs his face and rolls into his side, pressing an arm over his eyes and trying to clear his mind. He's not thinking about this, he's going to pretend it never happened and get some sleep. The crackling of the torch over the librarian's lectern lulls him to a fitful sleep.

Chapter End Notes

*As there is no seasalt in the Nether, the piglins get their salt they use for cooking and curing meats from Nether fossils, as bones have a high percentage of salts within them (please don't come for my ass if this is highly scientifically inaccurate)

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

****Warnings for this chapter: moderate violence and injuries, minor character death, some possessive behavior**

Sapnap is woken by a firm hand shaking him, he snuffles and tilts his head up, sleepy and disoriented, to find the piglin librarian leaning over him. His mouth feels dry and he realizes with a flare of embarrassment that there's dried drool on his cheek where he'd been pressing his face into the reading mat. He clumsily wipes at his face before he fully registers where he is. He jolts up and the librarian jerks back with a bemused snort. His bandana flops over his face, brushing his nose and he glances about the room before meeting the piglin's gaze.

He winces, trying to laugh through the awkwardness. "So uh.. I got lost in a good book?" His cheeks heat up and he rubs the back of his neck, hyper aware that there are no books near him. The librarian scoffs, pointedly giving him a once over before he raises one clawed hand and his mouth opens to say something. He's interrupted by thundering footsteps outside and a familiar piglin lurching through the doorway.

They both blink up at his husband, he's panting and looking panicked, hand gripping the doorframe. His breaths are coming in pants like he's been running all over the bastion. For a moment his eyes rest on Sapnap and he seems to slump a little, features softening in relief. And then he seems to notice the librarian kneeling very close to the human's side.

Sapnap tenses when his husband lets out a sound he's not heard before, at least from the very gentle piglin. The growl seems to fill the room and Sapnap inches back when his husband stalks forwards, vicious glare fixed on the piglin librarian. He swallows and can only stare, eyes wide, as the librarian gets to his feet, movements careful and calculated.

The two piglins glare at one another, fists clenching. His husband tilts his chin up challengingly, another aggressive growl rolling through his chest. The librarian snorts a reply but it lacks any true anger, it just feels... annoyed? Sapnap blinks in surprise when the piglin actually rolls his eyes before he straightens. He turns his head and brings a hand up to gesture pointedly at the gold ring in his ear with short agitated snorts and huffs.

His husband relaxes marginally, though his retort is still a low growl. He stalks past the librarian, eyes never leaving him, until he's between the other and Sapnap. Sapnap feels his stomach clench as his husband leans down and he can't help the little bewildered yelp when he's grabbed firmly and picked up.

His eyes widen so much they actually ache a little and his cheeks flush in mortification as he's hefted up against the piglin's chest. He forgets how strong his husband is. The librarian gives a sound, shrill but not quite a squeal, and makes his way over to his lectern, deliberately putting his back to them, though Sapnap can see his shoulders are still tense.

Sapnap tilts his head up a little with a gulp, it's hard to see his husband's expression but he's still fixated on the librarian and the taller male grips him tightly as he stalks towards the door. He wants to ask what the hell his husband's beef is with the other piglin but he's also kind of afraid to

redirect that anger towards himself.

So he stays quiet as he's carried from the library and through the halls, face red with mortification at all the confused glances sent their way. And nervousness is growing within him, making his stomach feel like it's twisting into a ball. There's a little relief when he recognizes they're headed for their sleeping quarters and not some kind of evil spooky dungeon, but he's still worried.

He backs up a little when he's set down, the piglin watching him with an unreadable expression. And then his husband slumps a little, the tension held in his body loosening and his brow furrows with a look of hurt and concern. He glances at their hammock before turning back to Sapnap and he wrings his hands, his claws pressing into the skin. He lets out a worried snort, huffing out a short exhale through his snout.

Oh, oh he'd been worried? Sapnap swallows before sighing and pressing a hand to rub the back of his neck. He meets the piglin's eyes and tries to explain, "I'm sorry dude, I.. I uh..." he fumbles with his words, a choked sound escaping when he remembers just why he hadn't come back to the hammock during the night. He can't help the way his face heats up, so much that it reaches the tips of his ears.

His husband watches him and he seems oddly... hurt. And that just adds to his tongue-tied-ness, it pours a thick layer of guilt on top of his nerves and embarrassment. He splutters out an awkward noise and tries again. "I uh.. couldn't sleep and I didn't want to wake you, you know? So I was wandering around-" he's talking too fast, he can tell, "and then I decided to go to the library and read to get myself sleepy you know? Heh.. and then I was too sleepy to come back so I just fell asleep there... kinda dumb I know." He rubs the back of his neck, laughing awkwardly and finding it hard to meet his husband's gaze.

The piglin huffs and takes a wary step towards him, reaching out hesitantly. Sapnap is busy fiddling with his hoodie's hood as a distraction so the press of a palm to his cheek makes him jump. His husband snorts out a string of piglin speech with the familiar 'ah ah' of his name, it sounds distressed. Sapnap blinks at him, the skin of his palm is so warm against his cheek, he feels so hyper aware of it. "Were you worried when I wasn't here? I'm.. I'm really sorry if I scared you bro."

The thumb on his cheek strokes over the skin and he can't help shivering. His husband's expression softens and he lets out a very gentle huffing laugh. Sapnap hopes that means he's forgiven, but he's a little distracted as the piglin moves a little closer, his thumb still stroking. The guy really is so much taller than him and he's got to be ripped, he carried him halfway across the bastion like it was nothing...

Sapnap isn't expecting the sudden flash of memory of the night before that suddenly springs to mind, and he's definitely not prepared for the subsequent thought of whether his husband would make those kinds of sounds... He jerks back like he's been burned, suddenly afraid of how close they are, afraid of where his mind is going. "Ah!.. Damn, I just realized you probably haven't eaten breakfast right?" He doesn't feel hungry at all but god he needs some kind of distraction.

His husband lets out a quickly-stifled-whine when he pulls back and his hands go back to wringing a little. He seems to swallow his reaction, coughing awkwardly and nodding tersely. The piglin gives him another unreadable look before he makes his way over to his chest, tugging out his work gloves and apron.

It's an everyday ritual, usually Sapnap sits on the chest next to theirs and fiddles with his bandana or mumbles sleepily while he wakes up. And his husband will send him fond glances before they head to the dining hall. The tenseness, the way the piglin seems wary to look or speak to him,

makes him ache. Sapnap buries his hands in his hoodie pockets and scuffs his sneakers on the floor. It feels like he's broken something delicate, something that had only just started becoming tangible.

xxxxx

For the next couple of days there's a little awkwardness around them, his husband seems hesitant to share the casual touch he's wont to. Even when they're sleeping he keeps his arms above his head or at his sides. Sapnap hadn't realized how accustomed he's become to the piglin's touch and he misses it.

And it doesn't help that he keeps thinking back to his accidental voyeurism, the memory seems to hit him at odd times and he has to swallow down the guilt and flustered blush that always accompanies it. He can't even look at the piglin couple in question, averting his gaze whenever he notices them in the dining hall or in their sleeping quarters.

At least the dining hall is always a flurry of activity and makes for a good distraction. Sapnap rubs his eyes, abandoning his spoon in his mushroom soup. He's not been sleeping well, he's gotten too used to his husband petting his back and the comforting weight of his arm as he holds him close. Without thinking he slumps into the piglin's side with a big yawn, unconsciously rubbing his cheek against the soft leather of his tunic.

His husband stiffens for a moment, pausing in his conversation with the one-eyed brute before he relaxes and continues. Sapnap had recently discovered the tough-looking brute was a big softie who had a pet strider, in a part of the Bastion where the floor was cracked and lava bubbled. He'd shown the baby piglins how to take turns feeding it a little warped fungus. Sapnap sighs contentedly when a clawed hand rests on his head, petting him gently.

When they crawl into their hammock that night, Sapnap swallows and reaches for his husband's hand. The piglin makes a curious snort and even in the dim light of the room he can make out a slight flush across the taller male's cheeks. Sapnap huffs out an embarrassed laugh, his own cheeks burning, and he awkwardly wraps the arm around his back, hiding his face in the firm chest beneath him.

He can hear the piglin's heart beating, feel the shuddery exhale that his husband lets out as much as hear it. The arm around his back tightens briefly before he begins petting his back. Sapnap sighs and rests one hand on his husband's shoulder, the other hanging off the edge of the hammock lazily.

He's only half aware, practically asleep, when his fingers edge up to brush the gold ring in the piglin's ear. His husband nuzzles into his fingertips with a soft snuffly sound. It makes his stomach flutter a little as he closes his eyes, a tiny smile tugging at his lips.

xxxxx

The mob share certain tasks, taking turns so that none of their other professions will be affected. Sapnap learns that any piglin can be called to join the hunting and gathering party. It's easy to deduce that any piglins that his friends and him have come across in the Nether outside of the Bastions have been part of these groups. It also explains why the items they have to trade vary so wildly.

Their group, or at least those they share sleeping quarters with are called into the center of the Bastion by the elder leader. They're offered large leather bags that resemble coin purses, and wicker baskets woven from dried weeping vines. At first Sapnap is confused and asks what they're

for, and his husband gives him a fond look before squatting and miming picking something from the floor and stuffing it into his basket.

“Oh, they’re for collecting mushrooms and stuff?” Sapnap scuffs his sneakers on the floor, he’s not been giving anything. “Can I go with you? I’m good with a bow!” He grins confidently.

The piglin blinks at him in surprise before he looks away, his shoulders tensing briefly. Sapnap furrows his brows before it occurs to him his husband might be thinking he wants to run away. He steps closer and pats his shoulder with what he hopes is a reassuring laugh, “hey, I just wanna hang out with you dude, I’m here until the month’s over, pinky promise!” He holds up his hand with a soft smile, all fingers curled inwards except for the smallest.

He’s not expecting the strange sinking feeling at his own words, he’d been starting to forget he was here on a contract. He swallows it down and watches as the piglin relaxes, though he just looks at his hand in confusion.

Sapnap lets out a bark of laughter, reaching for the taller male’s hand. His husband allows him to gently curl his fingers until just the clawed pinky is outstretched, watching in bewilderment and a little amusement. “Yeah like this, it’s like a sacred oath, the most unbreakable promise we have-” he puts on a mock-serious tone, his voice deepening, “we twist our pinkies together and we pinky promise.”

The piglin looks down at where their pinky fingers are interlinked and his sudden snorted laughter sets Sapnap off with a fit of his own. He doesn’t even think of the fact they’re probably drawing some very confused looks from the piglins around them, he’s honestly just enjoying the adorable way his husband covers his mouth, cheeks flushed as he shakes with mirth.

Sapnap huffs out one last breathless laugh before he gently lets his husband’s hand go. “So, can I have a bow?” He can’t help the excitement bubbling inside him at the thought of showing off a little. The thought of the piglin being impressed, of his husband’s attention just on him, while he’s doing something he’s actually really good at... it sends a flutter through his stomach.

The piglin pats his shoulder and walks over to the elder piglin and a small group of piglin brutes he’s talking with. Sapnap watches as they get into a discussion, gesturing towards him a few times. He shifts a little self-consciously, rubbing the back of his neck. He figures they’re probably discussing if he can be trusted, he hadn’t exactly given the piglin leader a good first impression. Finally they seem to come to an agreement and he’s ushered over.

Sapnap tries to smile winningly and appear as disarming as he can. The elder piglin tilts his head at him, assessing. And then he reaches out with one clawed hand, shaking subtly, towards one of the brutes. The brute snorts and retrieves a bow and quiver of arrows from his inventory, passing them into Sapnap’s hands.

“Yeah!! Thank you dude!” He bounces on his heels excitedly, swinging the quiver over his shoulder and hooking the bow over the other. He grins eagerly at his husband who gives him one in return, sharp fangs glinting from behind his tusks. Their gaze lingers, the piglin’s eyes shining fondly and Sapnap feels his heart quicken a little. He can’t help the heat that flashes through his cheeks, averting his eyes and fiddling with the bow. “So, are we heading out?”

xxxxx

He’s not prepared for the wave of heat that hits him when the huge crimson doors open and the drawbridge lowers. The sounds of the Nether are accompanied by the iron chains clinking and the creak of the bridge as it slowly cranks down to hit the edge of the blackstone bridge with a heavy

thud. Sapnap inhales sharply, he's been inside for over two weeks (roughly at least, it's tricky to measure time here), and while he's been able to peek out from windows and holes within the Bastion walls, venturing out really reminds him just how vast the Nether truly is.

He presses closer to his husband's side as their party makes their way over the bridge. The stomping of the piglins' heavy boots makes the wood shake, a vibration that makes his stomach lurch. He fixes his eyes on the other side, trying to not to think they're only on a slab of wood over a deep chasm.

Sapnap lets out a relieved exhale when he steps down onto the firm blackstone, glancing back to look up at the Bastion towering behind them. It feels so strange to feel fondness and familiarity with a place he's supposed to be wary of. He huffs out a little laugh to himself, he's never been too attached to the little houses he's built in the Overworld. He doesn't like living all alone and tends to take any excuse to invade his friends' house. The Bastion feels oddly more like home than anywhere he's lived before. He shakes the thought off with a bemused smile, he really needs to get out more.

Led by a pair of piglin brutes, they make their way through a gap in the netherrack, Sapnap blinks as the party is cast into shadow, inching closer to his husband. It doesn't feel like the path that he was carried through that first day, it's not as steep and they don't pass a gap with lava.

Sapnap glances at his husband and remembers how he was flung over the piglin's shoulder. He doesn't know why that memory creeps back every now and then. His cheeks burn and he averts his gaze, he doesn't like how much his brain is fixated on the memory of the piglin adjusting his grip on his thighs and *other places*. He's luckily jolted from his thoughts as they reach the end of the crevice and they climb up uneven rock steps to find themselves in a crimson forest.

His husband snorts gently, larger hand brushing his and Sapnap doesn't hesitate before taking it. He's forgotten how eerie the crimson forests sound; the distant echoes of ghosts, creaking sounds and something that could be the wind, or wailing. The mist that hangs over so much of the Nether is tinted red and only the light of the shroomlights and the more foreboding lava cut through it.

Their feet scuff over the nylium, his husband's boots crunching louder as they make their way through the forest. "So when we met, were you out gathering stuff like this?" Sapnap turns to the piglin who's scouting the area, eyes narrowed.

The piglin blinks at him before he nods, answering with a snort that ebbs into a squeal. He gestures towards the edge of the forest where red bleeds into cyan. Sapnap can see the patches of warped roots and twisting vines hanging down from the huge fungus that populate the warped forests.

"Guess I was just lucky then, to run into you," he grins up at the piglin, adjusting his bow a little. "Race you there!" He spins on his heel with a laugh and dashes off towards the forest overlap. He's not expecting the challenging snort his husband makes or the thunder of feet. He cranes his head and sees the piglin running after him, eyes full of mirth and a determination that makes his heart beat faster.

Sapnap whirls back around just to see the mound of nylium in his path, too close to leap over. He yelps and lurches over them, ending up in a heap on the ground with an "oof!" His husband skids to a stop with a concerned sound and then the piglin crouches down, crawling closer. He tilts his head, staring down at him with worried little snorts and snuffles.

Sapnap laughs breathlessly, still panting from the run, "I'm good, don't worry bro." His husband relaxes a little with a laugh of his own but he doesn't draw back immediately. Sapnap can't help noticing the position they're in, the piglin is practically on top of him and he feels his cheeks flush,

his palms sweating where they're pressed to the ground. The piglin is so close, eyes roaming his body and he knows it's just to check that he's really not hurt but, it still sends a shiver up his spine. The butterflies in his stomach are going crazy and his heart feels like it's banging against the inside of his ribcage.

The piglin huffs and gets onto his knees, offering him a hand. Sapnap swallows, laughing awkwardly and takes it. His husband's palm is warm, though cooler than the air around them, though he notices vaguely that it's a little wet with sweat. He doesn't have any time to ponder on it before the taller male is tugging him up.

For a while they spend time collecting roots and the vines. Sapnap discovers there's a knack to it and he lets his husband guide a small knife into his hands and show him, very gently, where and how to cut. It's really nice, and even when he starts hearing the vwoops and soft delicate steps of endermen around them, he just shifts closer to the piglin and keeps his eyes down.

When the wicker basket starts getting full, the piglin stretches with a yawn. He gestures back the way they came and Sapnap nods, standing to stretch himself. He can't help the satisfied little groan as his spine clicks, he's been hunched over for too long gathering plants. He catches the piglin staring down and realizes that his hoodie and undershirt have ridden up, exposing his belly button and happy trail.

He wheezes out a laugh and tugs his hoodie back down. "Hey do you reckon everyone else has finished?"

His husband takes a moment to reply, hands clenching on the handle of the wicker basket so hard some of the dried vine snaps. He jerks, looking down and self-consciously loosening his hold. He lifts his head and shrugs a little, ears twitching as he smiles.

Sapnap raises an eyebrow at the crunch, peering around a little to see if the piglin had seen anything that might spook him. Not seeing anything but two endermen a little in the distance, backs to them as they vwoop softly to each other, he adjusts the quiver and bow and follows his husband back into the crimson forest.

They run into the rest of the party, or at least most of them as they make their way to where they'd come from. One of the piglins has found a gold chestplate abandoned and tangled in weeping vines and is excitedly showing it off, receiving jealous snorts in response. The sudden thought that it's probably from a human who perished in the Nether suddenly hits him and Sapnap swallows, pressing closer to his husband's side.

They're all distracted by a loud snarl and whirl around to find, not too far away, two piglins fighting a group of hoglins. The piglins react immediately, dropping baskets and bags of gathered roots, mushrooms and vines and reaching for their swords and crossbows. Sapnap tugs out an arrow from his quiver, readying himself as he's dragged along with the mob as they rush into the battle.

He tries to stay near his husband as growling piglins and piglin brutes clash with the hoglins, the air full of pained snorts when either land a blow. A hoglin barrels into the piglins nearest him and he grunts as he's knocked to the floor, arrows sent flying out of his quiver. He scrambles to try and gather them up, the rough netherrack scratching up his palms as he hurries, trying to avoid being trampled as piglins dart around him, snarling and fending the hoglins off with their swords.

Sapnap gets to his feet, cramming arrows back into his quiver and then he realizes with a jolt that he can't see his husband. He whirls around, gripping his bow hard and then he sees him. The piglin has been driven up an incline by two hoglins and is growling back at them, pinging arrow after

arrow from his crossbow. Sarnap rushes towards him, watching the hoglins inching up the hill. They're wounded, bleeding from the many arrows that stick out of them like a pincushion, but they're still stubbornly out for blood.

And then the crossbow jams, and the sound of the fighting around them becomes background noise to him as he watches his husband struggle with the weapon, eyes widening as the hoglins see their chance. Sarnap feels fear and an uncontrollable rage sweep through him and he throws himself between his husband and them, bellowing, "Get away from him!!!"

He's lucky that the arrow he hits the hoglin with in the side of the snout throws it off its course by just enough to not hit him full on. Nevertheless, he's caught by the creature's vicious tusks, the material of his hoodie tearing as he's flung sideways. He hits the ground with a pained grunt and ignores the pain in his ribs as he scrambles up, hands shaking as he tries to ready another arrow.

The hoglin has jerked around and is stalking towards his husband. The piglin drops the crossbow and makes to fight barehanded, claws outstretched as he snarls. There's a pained squeak from behind them and Sarnap chances a glance to see a stray arrow has killed the second hoglin. He turns with his bow raised, yelping himself when the hoglin charges and knocks his husband flying, the piglin rolling onto the ground with a sickening thud.

Sarnap sees red and for a moment it feels like the world grinds to a halt around them. All he can feel is rage and desperate need to kill the mob. He fires arrow after arrow, his fingers stinging as the arrows and string bite into them, his movements clumsy in desperation. The hoglin slows in its charge, breaths ragged as it staggers and then finally, it keels over.

Sarnap pants, his legs shaking so much he's afraid he'll collapse. He drops his bow and runs to his husband's side, breaths harsh. The piglin has dragged himself up, one hand wrapped around his chest and the other pressed to the ground for balance. Sarnap falls to his knees, hand gently cupping the piglin's cheek. "Bro, are you okay?!" he can't keep the fear out of his voice, the hoglin had thrown him *so hard*.

His husband nods with a pained grin, eyes looking a little dazed. He keeps his arm wrapped protectively around his torso but his free hand reaches out to press his fingertips to the side of Sarnap's forehead with a worried snort. The touch stings and Sarnap lets out a pained hiss, reaching up himself to find a shallow gash in the skin, his fingers coming away bloody. "Ow, well that's not great." When the piglin gives him a panicked look he chuckles, "nah don't worry, it's a tiny cut, I'm good I think? What about you?" he gestures down to where his husband is still holding himself.

The piglin gently holds out his free hand, and Sarnap's stomach clenches oddly when he sees his own blood on his fingertips, and he wiggles his hand in a 'so-so' motion. Sarnap huffs out a breath, feeling relieved, "I'm gonna take that as hurt but not gonna die yeah?" The piglin laughs, though it holds a pained tinge, especially when it turns into a cough.

They're interrupted by a chorus of excited snorts and they turn to find the rest of their party doing the celebratory dance, arms outstretched and heads bobbing. Sarnap grins, happy to see they hadn't lost many piglins in the skirmish and he reaches around to help his husband get up. He helps the piglin to swing an arm around his shoulders, stomach clenching at the pained sound his husband lets out. "Lean on me dude?"

The piglins, those that weren't too injured at least, stashed their weapons back into their inventory before retrieving the baskets of gathered plants. Sarnap helped his husband down the hill, staggering a little himself. The taller male was a little heavier and his body was pretty beat up. His own chest aches, the cut on his head stinging and he knows he's going to be covered in bruises

tomorrow.

The walk back to the Bastion is hard going and the sight of the towering blackstone makes Sarnap's heart soar with joy and relief. He's still so worried about his husband, the piglin keeps making pained little grunts and gasps even though he's obviously trying to hide them. There's a high chance he has a broken rib or two which isn't so bad on its own, but the extent of the fracture and whether an internal organ is pierced could make it very serious.

As they're crossing the bridge to get back into the Bastion, a ghast floats into sight. Sarnap almost freezes in fear. He's unarmed except for his quiver and he can't run or duck or else he'll hurt his husband. The flying mob's eyes glance down and Sarnap winces, expecting the wail and the roar of a flameball.

The large creature rakes its eyes over the mob for a moment, and Sarnap feels like his heart will rattle right out of his bruised ribs. And then it floats on and he breathes a sigh of relief, following the rest of the party back inside. A piglin brute takes one look at the state of his husband and gestures for his quiver so he can support the injured piglin with both hands easier.

They're ushered towards the apothecary's workshop, Sarnap has only been to the workshop once and he mostly just peered in the door while the apothecary and his assistant examined a patient. He helps his husband sit on a pallet, padded with a hoglin hide, wincing in sympathy at the choked sounds of pain the piglin makes. He kneels next to him, holding his hand tight as he looks over at the apothecary assessing the injuries of the party before turning to the shelves that span a large chunk of the wall.

The shelves are filled with potions and ointments, the magic within the concoctions shimmering and swirling endlessly within the glass of the bottles and jars. A cauldron and brewing stand are close by and Sarnap gulps when his eyes raise to see metal instruments hooked along the wall, they look pretty terrifying he's not gonna lie.

He turns back to his husband, squeezing his hand a little reassuringly. "Hey, you okay?" The piglin leans into him, giving him a soft look. He shrugs with a pained grunt before he squeezes his hand back. Sarnap feels his heart beat a little faster as his husband tilts his head a little, ears twitching, eyes still fixed on his face.

They're interrupted by a loud snort, the apothecary kneeling down next to the pallet. Sarnap shifts over to give him room but he doesn't let his husband's hand go. The piglin reaches for his husband and presses his hands to his chest. His husband yelps and Sarnap feels him grip his hand tight. The apothecary lets out a noise that sounds suspiciously like a tut, shaking his head a little before reaching into his inventory.

He produces a bottle of healing potion and gestures to it with a series of snorts. His husband nods and takes the bottle gingerly with his free hand, claws clinking against the glass. Then he brings it to his lips and Sarnap doesn't know why his eyes zero in on how he wraps his mouth around the rim of the bottle. He feels his cheeks redden, breath catching a little as the piglin drains the bottle, his adam's apple bobbing as he swallows.

Swirls of magic appearing around his husband are a distraction. The piglin gasps as the potion sets to work on his ribs, the pinkish glow focusing on his torso as it mends the broken bones and the bruised flesh encasing them. He slumps back a little, eyes glowing from the effect. The worse the injury, the more potent the healing potion needed to be.

The apothecary grunts in satisfaction before he turns to him. Sarnap holds up his free hand, grinning sheepishly, "I'm good bro, I just got pushed around a little."

The piglin fixes him with a firm stare that brooks no argument. Sapnap swallows and leans back a bit as the piglin reaches out and starts examining his torso. He jolts when he realizes he can feel the clawed fingers on his flesh, as though there's almost no cloth there- Sapnap looks down and yelps. His hoodie has almost been torn to shreds, large tears gouged into the thick cloth and even a little into the black undershirt he wears.

He shudders when he realizes how close those tusks had come to breaking the skin. The apothecary hums, his palms pressing into his ribcage firmly and almost knocking the wind out of him. Seeming satisfied that he doesn't have any broken bones himself, the piglin tugs a small jar out of his inventory. He scoops out a little on his fingertips and Sapnap jumps with a hiss when he tugs up his shirt just enough to allow him to rub the ointment into his chest.

He feels hands gripping him from behind, and his husband makes a soft growl. The apothecary snorts, sending the piglin behind him an unamused stare, as he presses more healing ointment to the gash on the human's forehead. With another huff, he slowly removes his hands and gets to his feet. He goes to the cauldron to clean them, leaving them alone. Sapnap adjusts his shirt and what remains of his hoodie. He sighs forlornly as he runs a hand over the large tear, which has obliterated the flame print. His husband shifts until he's next to him and he makes an inquisitive sound.

Sapnap swallows and tries for a laugh but it's too strained to sound mirthful. He can feel the magic working on his skin, the flesh tingling pleasantly and he sighs again. He offers the piglin a sad smile, "I uh," he looks down at the hoodie once more and he's not sure if it's the adrenaline wearing off or just the torn cloth that's making him feel choked up.

"When I first left home to go adventuring with my friends, I didn't know how to use a loom," he pauses to explain, "it's something we use to make clothes in the Overworld... and my friend Dream said he'd make me something super cool." He does laugh then, though there are tears brewing in his eyes, he misses his friends and the damn hoodie was precious, it had become his thing, "the fire design is just a thing, but it kinda became my symbol I guess? It reminds me of good times."

His husband rubs his back comfortingly and he leans into him. The piglin smells reassuring; musk and leather. Sapnap tilts his head back, meeting the taller male's gaze, "I'm really glad you didn't die bro, don't do that to me again yeah?"

The piglin laughs and nods, pointing at him with an amused snort.

Sapnap barks out a laugh of his own, "what, me? Yeah sure, I won't die dude, don't sweat it."

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone, I'm sorry to start on such a negative note but I feel I need to address something;

I got a comment saying that this fic may have been mentioned in a donation during one of Sapnap's streams. Please do not contact the content creators like that, it is stepping over their personal boundaries, especially when it's shippy or explicit fanworks. I implore people to please not do that and I'm incredibly sorry to Sapnap if he was sent a donation like that.

Sorry to start off so negatively, thank you for everyone leaving kudos and such nice comments and being so patient in waiting for an update, I appreciate all of you ^v^

Sapnap swallows hard as he folds what remains of his hoodie and shirt and stashes them in their chest. He shivers, his body has adjusted to the heat and it's tricking him into believing there's a chill against his bare skin. He's honestly pretty touched that his husband just gives him access to his chest, the piglin has a stash of gold inside and Sapnap knows just how precious that is to the mob.

Sapnap stretches with a yawn, his back cracking a little. He's still feeling stiff from the run in with the hoglins, healing potions could mend a great deal but there were limits. He reaches for the folded leather draped over the chest next to theirs, his husband had pulled out a spare tunic for him to wear. It's surprisingly soft and big, the piglin is taller and broader. It ends up falling a little low over his pants, almost to his knees.

He yawns, stretching. It must be nearing 'midday', he'd refused to get up that morning, whining and mumbling sleepy protests. His husband had patted him at first with soft insistent grunts but eventually had huffed out a laugh and ruffled his hair affectionately before leaving with the rest of the group. His stomach flutters and he adjusts his bandana, cheeks reddening a little as he recalls claws doing the same the night before.

Sapnap hums as he saunters down the hallway, shucking up the oversized tunic so he can shove his hands in his pockets. He barely needs his makeshift map now, at least for the halls he frequents often. The lanterns cast a cheery gold light through the corridors and he can hear the distant clangs of the kitchen. His stomach rumbles, reminding him that he missed breakfast and he picks up the pace a little.

He's almost to the dining all when a hand grabs his shoulder gently. He yelps in surprise and whirls around, stepping back just a little on reflex before he realizes it's his husband. The piglin

blinks at him, ears twitching and then he snorts out a familiar laugh. He's left his gloves in the forge but left his apron on, the heavy leather dotted with dust and ash.

"Hey! You scared me dude!" Sarnap tries to sound indignant but his mouth keeps twitching up into a grin. He slips his hands out of his pockets and gestures to the dining hall door. "Wanna go ea-"

He's interrupted by a hand taking his and he can't keep the small sound of surprise inside as the piglin draws him into a side corridor. "Uh?" The piglin keeps a hold of his hand, casting a quick look around before turning back to him.

Sarnap opens his mouth, about to ask what's up when his husband averts his eyes, free hand digging into the pocket of his apron. And then the piglin meets his gaze shyly, a light flush across his cheeks as he offers something wrapped in parchment. When the human doesn't take it immediately he presses it into his palm with a little huff.

Sarnap stares down at the folded parchment in his palm, whatever is inside is heavy and is a little wider than his hand. He carefully unfolds the parcel, breath catching when he reveals a gold belt buckle, beautifully crafted into the fire symbol he'd had on his hoodie. The flame points have been sanded down to make them a little less sharp and engraved into the metal are tiny intricate details to make up the flames, creating depth and the illusion of them moving.

For a long moment he's frozen, crafting something like this must have taken the piglin hours, days even. It's so precious. He feels a surge of intense gratefulness, a bubble of warmth that explodes inside him. He looks up at the taller male, finding him still looking a little nervous, and hopeful, obviously trying to gauge his reaction. Sarnap feels his throat get tight, he can't express how touched he is.

He doesn't remember reaching up and tugging the piglin down, just that suddenly he's pressing his lips to his, feeling the press of soft lip and hard tusk against his mouth. He draws back after a moment, heels hitting the ground and hand still on the piglin's shoulder, the other clenching the buckle protectively. He breathes out a shuddering breath, cheeks red hot and he finds his husband blinking down at him, his own face flushing.

A hand strokes his cheek and he feels his heart flutter in his chest, breath catching again when the piglin leans down. Sarnap tilts his chin up a little, lips parting, his body tingling a little in anticipation. And then his husband pauses, drawing back a little to press a little nuzzle of his snout against his forehead with an embarrassed grunt. He straightens and pats his shoulder, face still reddened and ears twitching before he makes an almost garbled-sounding series of grunts, gesturing back to the dining hall.

Sapnap is frozen in place and he knows his face must be beetroot at this point. He carefully presses the buckle into his pocket, managing to choke out a “thank you.” He’s a mess of confusion and *deep* embarrassment and honestly frustration.

He manages to swallow it down a little, still flushed all the way to his ears as he follows his husband into the dining hall. His throat feels tight, stomach clenching a little and he wants to demand what the hell just happened but he’s nervous too. And the piglin looks just as lost as he does, his clawed hands actually shaking as he takes a bowl of stew.

Had he messed up? Was it forbidden or something, considering he wasn’t a piglin? He tries to distract himself from his thoughts with his own steaming stew, and manages to burn his tongue for his trouble. He whimpers a little and a hand presses to his shoulder, a familiar concerned snort making him turn. His husband gives him a once over, looking worried and he offers him a weak little laugh, “I burnt my tongue.”

The piglin looks relieved, and he gestures for Sapnap’s spoon. He lets him have it and can’t help chuckling when the taller male actually scoops up some stew and blows on it for him. “Hey! Don’t patronize me Sir, I’ll-” he’s cut off by the spoon being pressed to his lips and he gives the piglin an unimpressed pout before wrapping his lips around the spoon.

His husband flushes a little before offering him a little snort of approval. Sapnap huffs a little amused breath and goes to take the spoon. The piglin lets him take it but then catches his hand. He blinks, holding the spoon between thumb and forefinger as the piglin gently uncurls his little finger and hooks his own around it. Sapnap looks up to find his husband looking oddly remorseful. It feels like some kind of apology.

Sapnap swallows, his throat tight and he’s not sure what to say. He’s not even sure what the other is sorry for. “Hey do you have a belt I can put the buckle on?” He offers the piglin a soft smile and his heart beats faster when the other lights up. “I love it, like seriously love it dude.” He can’t help going red himself, stomach fluttering again at the happy glint in the piglin’s eyes and the excited squeal he makes.

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Sapnap doesn’t mind the envious snorts he gets from the other piglins around their sleeping quarters when his husband helps him fasten the belt around his waist. The gold buckle glints in the torchlight and reflects the piglin’s claws as he slips the pin through the black leather. Sapnap can’t help the slight shiver that runs through him at the feel of the taller male pressed to his back. He’s a little disappointed when he draws back.

Usually the piglin would reach into their chest for his gloves and apron, and he often snorts questioningly and gestures to see if Sapnap wants his bag or his map. Today he doesn't give the chest a glance however, simply nodding towards the door. Sapnap furrows his brow in confusion and then as he looks around he notices none of the other piglins have donned their workday garb.

He follows them, rather perplexed as they head down to the dining hall as normal. It's a type of gruel for breakfast, ground roots boiled in water and it has a bitter edge to it. Sapnap's found himself getting used to the more limited flavor palette however and he just slurps it down. His husband chuckles at him and when he sets down the bowl the piglin reaches over to brush a little of the gruel from around his mouth.

Sapnap ducks his head with a flustered chuckle and wiggles a little closer. "So, I've noticed you haven't got your gloves and stuff today? Not going to the forge?"

His husband drains the last of his bowl and swallows before shaking his head. He presses his claws to his lip as though pondering how to explain something before he huffs out a frustrated snort.

"Hey don't sweat it bro, maybe you can show me instead?" Sapnap offers him a smile, gripping the table edge a little. The piglin looks relieved and nods emphatically before he starts to stand. The piglins around the room are stacking their used bowls, snorting excitedly. There's a bubbling in the atmosphere of the room, the mob moving faster to clear their tables and leave the room.

Sapnap follows his husband to join the throng, curiosity rising as rather than dispersing to their various workstations, everyone heads towards the stairs that head deeper into the Bastion. He's never ventured down this far and he's not sure if the walls are thicker or if it's just that there are fewer gaps in the walls but it actually feels a little cooler.

They reach a corridor and he sticks close to his husband as they walk through, he tries to peer around but it's hard to see much through a crowd of piglins that are a head taller or more than him. He does spot an open door with what looks like a tannery, a group of piglins working around iron vats of water. The far wall is open to the Nether, only thin iron bars separating them from the elements. There's a strong and rather unpleasant odor and he has to resist covering his nose. Then the door closes and the group moves on.

He's truly not expecting the wide room they come to. Just as vast as the dining hall, the chamber is taken up mostly by a bath cut into the floor. He blinks in shock at the steaming water, mind boggling at it. And then he realizes it's *iron*, the entire bath is made of iron, like a gigantic cauldron. Around the sides of the room are benches made from warped fungus, the aqua a stark contrast to the blackstone of the walls.

He allows his husband to tug him over to a bench. What appears to be most of the Bastion have joined them, there's a noisy excited bustle. He notices the librarian and the piglin that must be his spouse (he can see the earring glinting in his ear) talking in the corner and he wonders why the librarian is still wearing his work clothes.

His husband huffs to get his attention and he turns to find him unbuckling his belt. The piglin snorts happily before he starts tugging his tunic up over his head and Sapnap finds he can't pull his eyes away as the piglin's torso is revealed. He swallows, face getting hot and his palms sweating as the taller male folds the material and sets it on the bench.

He's pale and surprisingly hairless, his muscles not defined but still obvious as he moves. And Sapnap feels his breath catch just a little and he has to avert his gaze, gripping the material of his pants to ground himself. The piglin's nipples are pierced, small gold bars that stand out against the dusky pink of his nipples. He feels eyes on him and with another hard swallow, he starts on his own belt and tunic.

He sets the tunic and belt on the bench, sitting down to tug off his sneakers and socks. His husband snorts out something that sounds questioning and he dares to look up. The piglin has kicked off his boots and is only in his shorts and he gestures worriedly to the golden buckle. Sapnap tilts his head, "huh?"

With another huff, the piglin cups his cheek and gently coaxes him to turn his head. Sitting on the edge of the bath are the gaggle of baby piglins, all kicking their clawed feet in the water and giggling. He makes the connection with a knowing soft laugh of his own, "oh yeah, they uh, like to collect gold don't they?"

His husband reaches for his belt and it disappears from his hands as he stashes it in his inventory. And then his claws hook into his shorts and Sapnap looks away, eyes wide as he blushes hotly. He's not sure if it's better or worse that they're not alone and surrounded by piglins in varying states of undress as they get ready to hop into the bath.

Sapnap notices he's being given some odd glances and realizes with a start how odd he must look to the mob. He ducks his head, hands reaching up to undo his bandana self consciously. He's hairy, a little on his chest and a happy trail that leads all the way down and on his legs too. His husband gives a questioning grunt besides him before patting his shoulder and he watches his shins and feet go past as he walks towards the bath.

With a shuddering breath he stands and does his best to swallow the embarrassment as he shoves his pants and underwear down. It's a relief at least that he's certainly not the only one naked and he can try to pretend no one is looking at him.

Still he keeps his hands over his crotch as he hurries over to the bath and clumsily crouches down to slip in. He gasps, gripping the iron edge of the pool, it's really hot, almost hot enough to hurt. He looks around to find his husband and shyly shuffles over, hissing as the water reaches more of his sensitive skin.

It's not too deep, the water level just above waist height. His husband is scrubbing at his arms and shoulders and Sapnap bites his lip, eyes inadvertently roaming over the piglin's torso again. He tries to distract himself by taking a gasping air and ducking beneath the water. The heat hits him again, burning the insides of his nostrils and his eyes and he comes out gasping and coughing. His husband squeals and shoves the sopping wet hair out of his face, giving him a very concerned look.

Sapnap coughs out a laugh, "I'm good, sorry." He brushes the water from his face, feeling a droplet clinging to the tip of his nose. He tries to scrub more water into his hair, god now that his body is starting to adjust to the temperature it feels incredibly good to scrub away weeks worth of grime and sweat. And hot water is a *luxury*, it's tricky to warm enough for a full bath in the Overworld (Dream, George and him usually only do it when travelling through cold biomes).

"I wish I had some soap, my hair is so gross right now, ew," he had noticed how greasy it was becoming, but he'd just tried not to touch it too much. His husband hums thoughtfully and he pauses to watch him reach over to a box by the bath's edge. He pulls out a handful of twisting vine leaves and gently submerges them before rubbing them in a circular motion into his palm.

Sapnap leans closer and raises his eyebrows when the leaves start foaming, leaving an almost sweet scented foam on the piglin's palm. He leaves the crumpled leaves on the edge and motions the human closer. Sapnap shifts closer and swallows as he's turned around, his husband pressed almost against his back. He's suddenly very very aware that there's nothing between them except water. Clawed hands press to his head carefully and experimentally start rubbing the foam into his hair.

He can't help melting, the piglin is gently massaging the soap into his scalp and sending tiny tingles down his spine. The noise of the room seems to melt away, the snorts and splashes and everything zeros down to the feel of his husband's hands and how close they are. He arches a little into the touch with a contented moan and the piglin lets out a soft but rather startled sound, moving back a little.

Sapnap blinks with a confused hum when the fingers give one last rub before falling away. He opens his eyes and shivers, he doesn't remember closing them. He turns to find his husband washing his hands off in the water and when he notices him looking, the piglin flushes and turns around a little, splashing water onto his face and scrubbing.

Sapnap finds his eyes trailing down that broad back, from the shoulders to where the water is lapping around his waist. He notices a corkscrew tail beneath the water and is distracted by how cute that is before his eyes take in the curve of the piglin's- he coughs and huffs out an embarrassed breath, turning himself to duck under the water again, scrubbing at his head and pretending he wasn't just eyeing his husband's ass. Which was decidedly pretty fine from what he could see but *still* ...

He's squeezing out the water from his hair, droplets splashing into the water of the bath when a bell goes off. The piglins freeze, snorted conversation coming to a stop as the ringing continues and Sapnap straightens to see the mob are all looking to the ceiling or to the door. A piglin brute appears at the doorway and snarls, and Sapnap realizes with a start he can read that there's a concerned warning in it, not just aggression.

There's a sudden flurry of activity as piglins start hurrying towards the bath's edge, hosing themselves out and rushing to their discarded garments. Sapnap yelps as his husband tugs him out of the bath and over to their clothes. There's a serious sense of urgency as they struggle to pull their clothes back on over wet skin. Sapnap forgoes his socks entirely and winces at the feel of soaked cloth against his skin. He manages to get his bandana on, tying it clumsily before he's steered towards the door.

The bell is still ringing and as the group hurry up the stairs he's wracking his brain to think of what in the Overworld might be going on. All he can think about is a raid, but as far as he's aware those don't happen in the Nether. The Piglin's enemies are withers, wither skeletons and hoglins and he doubts any would approach a Bastion. The only ones who tend to invade a Bastion are other humans.

As the group makes it into the main part of the Bastion, Sapnap can pick up more than just the bell. Piglin brute snarls and crashes and shouting and-

"Let us go you pig assholes! We're wearing gold! We *gave* you gold! You attacked us out of nowhere!"

Sapnap rushes forwards, pushing his way through the crowd. He's still holding his husband's hand and the piglin stumbles behind him, snorting in confusion. Near the entrance of the Bastion, struggling against the hold of a group of piglin brutes are Dream and George. Dream is yelling bloody murder and biting at the arm holding him, and George is trying to wrestle his sword back from a brute.

The elder piglin leader is snarling and directing two armed brutes towards them. Sapnap yells out a panicked "WAIT!" and the group freezes, all turning towards him.

Dream and George's eyes go wide, the latter's mouth gaping. Their response is almost eerily in sync, "*Sapnap* ?!"

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Aaaa I'm so incredibly sorry for the wait, I had awful writer's block and was in bad headspace for a while.

Thank you for all your comments my gosh, you're all wonderful and so sweet and I'm so happy you're still enjoying this!

Shoutout to my sweet datemate for protecting my ass in Minecraft and also giving me a bunch of help with this chapter and cheering me on when I struggled <3

Sapnap feels droplets of water running down the back of his neck from his damp hair and an overwhelming mixture of confusion, and fear grip him. He's frozen for a long moment before his legs move almost involuntarily, jerking forwards with his hand outstretched. "Hey wait!" he can't help repeating the yell, a little less loud with so many eyes on him. "They're my friends."

There's snorts and snuffles of confusion around them and the elder leader actually looks taken aback, glancing between them. He snorts, waving his hand to stop the approaching brutes but his glaring eyes remain on Dream and George and he huffs warily.

"Sapnap, what the *hell* ?!" Dream has his mask tugged to the side of his head and his nose is bloody. Other than that though, he seems unharmed. He relaxes a fraction, staring at Sapnap and he seems torn between disbelief and bemusement. "What are you doing here dude?"

"And what are you *wearing* ?" George, paused with his arm outstretched for his sword, gives him a once-over with a confused smile.

Sapnap glances down, he'd almost forgotten he wasn't wearing his normal hoodie, his husband's spare tunic is soft and comforting. He shrugs, grinning a little, "I'll explain all that later," he doesn't know how he's going to explain anything, but he's more worried about how angry the leader looks. He feels his husband squeeze his hand and chances a quick glance over his shoulder to the taller male.

The piglin gives him a little encouraging nod, ears twitching and he turns, swallowing before addressing the elder directly. He tries for a disarming smile, "hey, can you let my friends go please? I can vouch for them, they're good guys."

The elder leader snorts angrily and gestures to the Bastion main doors and then to the familiar nether wart farm nearby. Sapnap can see that the crop has been crushed in several places and the gold is strewn about, some actually missing. He feels his stomach twist, *oh no* .

He turns to his friends, mouthing an emphatic ‘ *what the fuck ?!*’ before he brings up his free hand to clench the bridge of his nose with an exasperated sigh. He meets the elder leader’s eyes and offers a sheepish smile, slumping a little, “okay, that’s- heh... I get why you’re mad bro.” He shoots a pointed look at his friends as he continues, “they’re going to give all the gold *back* and help replant the nether wart, right guys?”

George rolls his eyes and agrees with a shrug, sounding practically disinterested. His eyes are still on his diamond sword but he’s no longer struggling in the brute’s hold. Dream takes a longer moment to agree, eyes glancing to the large Bastion doors and then around to where he’s completely surrounded. Sapnap knows his friend is working out how easily they can run. But even though he really hates admitting defeat, Dream’s anything but stupid and with an irritated sigh he also nods, gritting out a “yeah, sure.”

The leader seems to think about it for a long moment, surveying the damage to the farm once more. He snorts at the farmer who is gathering up trampled warts and the disgruntled piglin squeals in reply. He turns back to Sapnap and nods, seeming satisfied with the deal. The wizened piglin approaches his friends and scrutinizes them both before he finally grunts to the brutes to let them go.

Dream and George jerk away as quickly as they’re able, George still glaring at the brute with his weapons and Dream folding his arms, still obviously annoyed at the whole thing. Sapnap allows himself to let out a deep sigh, squeezing his husband’s hand. The piglin approaches his side and glances between him and his friends curiously.

The elder leader addresses the crowd, tone reassuring and he directs the mob to return to their activities, all except their small group and the brute soldiers. The rest of the piglins who’d been bathing turn back to the stairs, snorting and huffing to each other. Sapnap is glad for the dry heat, he’s already starting to dry and the discomfort of damp cloth and leather against his skin lessens.

“I have so many questions,” Dream’s voice is full of bewilderment. He’s swiping at the drying blood on his face and giving Sapnap a once over before he seems to fully register he’s holding a piglin’s hand. His mouth falls open and he gapes for a moment before grinning, eyes crinkling with bemused mirth, “what no hug or anything dude?” He saunters closer, arms outstretched in invitation.

Sapnap snorts out a laugh and lets go of his husband’s hand, ready to give his friend a hug but they’re interrupted by two brutes intercepting. The piglins snarl threateningly, standing between

them and giving Dream a wary look. His friend backs up a little with his hands up, shooting him confused glances through the gap between the two brutes.

Sapnap freezes, arms falling a little and he takes a step back himself, hoping that will calm the brutes. A hand presses to his shoulder, clawed thumb tip brushing the bare skin exposed by the too-large collar. He turns a little to find his husband glancing between him and Dream. The piglin lets out a soft distressed snort, ears twitching as he tilts his head.

There's a loud harsh squeal and they all turn to find the elder leader is gesturing them all to follow. The brutes push closer, obviously ready to use force if needed. The one who'd been bitten by Dream is rubbing his reddened arm, eyeing the masked man warily. Sapnap clears his throat, giving his friends a slightly uncomfortable grin, "just follow him, come on."

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Sapnap hasn't been inside the elder piglin's chamber since that first day. It's still rather chaotic, the table littered with parchment, books and ink. Sapnap eyes the ink well, he'd wondered what the piglins used for ink until he'd watched the librarian fetch a pestle and mortar one day and carefully crush charcoal and a little water until he had enough to fill a bottle. It seemed thicker than squid ink, but worked well with the brushes the mob made from hoglin bristles.

He's jolted from his thoughts as George bumps into him. The room feels rather crowded with them all squashed inside. The elder makes his way around the table and presses his clawed hands to the surface, giving them all a deep look. And then he tugs out a new sheet of parchment and begins writing.

"What's he doing?" George whispers to him and Sapnap snorts a little, turning to his friend. With his anxiety over them being harmed waning, he's starting to bubble with at seeing them again.

"Probably writing down a contract for you guys to sign, he's very official like that." He meets the leader's gaze across the table and the elder piglin actually offers him a grin before he goes back to his cursive. Sapnap feels an echoing grin tug at his lips before he notices a tiny detail he hadn't previously on the wizened piglin. There's a long-healed scar in his ear from a torn out piercing. He presses a little closer to his husband without thinking, not wanting to consider what that might mean.

The piglin leader finishes the parchment with a flourish and slides it across the table towards them. Dream takes it with a raised eyebrow and shuffles closer to George to let him read. After a minute he looks up, "wait, we have to be unarmed at all times? What if we get attacked?" He shoots a

pointed glance at the piglin brutes around them who huff in response.

“You won’t be, if you don’t attack them first,” Sapnap blinks at his own words, he’s surprised by how much he trusts the mob. And by the looks his friends are giving him, he’s not the only one.

The leader grunts his agreement and then takes the parchment back to add an amendment. He tugs out the familiar little ink dish and pours in a little. Dream and George look over the contract again, George reading the amendment aloud, “we will keep your weaponry safe for the time of your stay and return them upon your leaving. You shall also be accompanied by two guards at all times. This is for the protection of our tribe, especially our young ones. It shall also protect you from agitating any piglins before they are given word of your stay.” He shrugs, adjusting his goggles a little, “yeah that seems pretty fair to be honest.”

Dream frowns and rereads the parchment once more before he sighs, sounding exasperated when he replies “yeah sure, we agree. Also we’re taking Sapnap when we leave-”

“No!” Sapnap shrinks a little when his friend turns to him before he straightens and levels the taller man with a firm look. He feels his husband pressing closer to him, a soft protective growl under his breath. “I’m not... going yet, I’ll explain later okay?”

The piglin leader snorts and bangs the table once to get their attention, a little of the ink splashing out onto the parchment. Sapnap swallows, he really doesn’t like the looks his friends are giving him, like he’s some kind of stranger. He croaks out, “he wants you to sign the parchment with your fingerprints.”

He can practically see the questions mounting in the expressions his friends have, but they manage to hold off while they sign the contract and with a little more hesitance dump out the gold from their inventories. It clunks and thuds as it hits the table top and Sapnap is stewing internally on the thought of how in the Overworld he’s going to explain everything.

“So,” Dream stretches with a yawn, back cracking a little, “I guess we head back to help Mr farmer pig, let’s get this over with.” He looks over to George, the shorter man attempting to wipe the ink off his finger unsuccessfully. “George?”

George looks up and shrugs, “yeah I’m coming.” He glances at Sapnap, eyebrow raising when he looks at his husband again, “Sapnap you’re going to have to show us the way back.”

Sapnap chuckles, rubbing the back of his neck, “yeah this place is kind of a maze.” He jerks his head towards the door, he’s honestly bursting with questions himself. His husband squeezes his hand a little and he shoots him a grin, tugging him towards the door.

A few brutes follow them as they make their way through the hallways, garnering curious looks from piglins that are working. Sapnap glances over at Dream, who’s shifted closer to stand next to George, “What are you guys doing here? Were you after pearls to get to the End?”

“What are *you* doing here? We got back from travelling and we were gonna stock up on supplies, you know, to go after the dragon? But like, your house was deserted and your crops had withered away like you hadn’t been there in weeks and we panicked? So we were searching all over for you and finally came to the Nether and have you literally been here this whole time?!” Dream’s voice grows steadily louder, his hands moving rapidly.

“Sorry dude,” Sapnap fiddles with his ear, the hard press of the metal ring soothing. He feels awful, damn his friends must have been pretty worried. It wouldn’t have been the first time he’d abandoned a house though. “I just meant to visit the Nether to get some pearls, and then..” he trails off and glances at his husband, cheeks reddening just a little when the piglin tilts his head, “I got a little held up.”

“You’re avoiding the question Sapnap,” George drawls, yawning again. “What’s up with the piglins? Can you understand them now or something?”

Dream glanced back at the brutes, inching forwards a little away from them, “and why are they protecting you?” He pauses for a moment before continuing, “and why haven’t you just left?”

“Stop giving me that weird look,” Sapnap sighs a little in relief when they find themselves back at the farm. He’s stalling and he hopes replanting the crop will be a bit of a distraction. “Hey did you know striders taste finger-lickin’ good?” He waves at the nether wart farmer and the piglin gives him a quizzical look in response. He makes his way over, turning to his husband with a sheepish laugh, “sorry about dragging you out of the bath early.”

The piglin shrugs, snorting bemusedly, he gives his friends a glance and moves a little closer, ruffling his hair gently. Sapnap leans into the touch before he fully registers the looks he’s getting.

He ducks his head a little and coughs, “so we should plant this nether wart right?” He can’t help the flush on his cheeks.

“I’m so lost right now, “ Dream’s voice is confused, tinged with mirth and some level of exasperation. He keeps sending him incredulous looks as George approaches the farmer for seedlings and bone meal. “ *How long* have you been here Sapnap?”

Sapnap brushes his husband’s arm with his fingertips. The piglin is quiet, as though he’s assessing the situation. “Uh.. a few weeks I guess? It’s hard to tell in the Nether.”

He takes some of the wart from George, grinning sheepishly at the immediate “What?!” his answer receives from them both. “Sapnap you’re going to tell us everything,” George shoots him a glance, stooping the plant some seedlings and sprinkling bone meal over the top.

Sapnap sighs and starts replanting some of them himself, “yeah yeah I will, we’ll find somewhere to sit and I’ll explain stuff alright?” The soul sand sticks to his skin, clinging to his fingers before falling much slower than sand ever should. “So, what have you guys been up to? You were gone for forever!”

Dream wheezes out one of his breathless laughs, clapping his hands to get rid of the sand as he stands. “We went all over, we were exploring all these islands right George? And we found three abandoned portals, and a jungle temple and Sapnap, we found so many sunken ships I swear.”

“We also found this uh.. settlement I guess? A bunch of really cool people. So we ended up staying with them and built a little house, maybe we’ll go back there I guess?” George hands the remaining bag of bone meal back to the farmer and stands. He’s looking around the Bastion curiously, shoving his goggles up to the top of his head.

A familiar bell rings out and Dream and George jump. Dream whirls around trying to see where it’s coming from, “what the hell is that?”

Sapnap feels his stomach rumble as if on cue and he grins, hearing the sound of footsteps as the mob start making their way to the dining hall. “It’s dinner time dudes!” He shrugs, “there’s no day or night in the Nether so they have like, a schedule I guess? Everyone wakes up, eats, works and sleeps around the same time. It’s chill, you guys hungry?” He rucks the leather tunic up, bunching it awkwardly so he can stuff his hands into his pants pockets.

“Yeah, I could eat.” George lights up a little, the guy gets ridiculously feral over food after all. Dream slings an arm around his shoulder, grinning himself and nods.

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“So, are you gonna introduce us to your friend or not?” Dream speaks around a mouthful of roasted hoglin, pointedly pretending to ignore the mixture of curious and wary looks he and George are getting.

Sapnap swallows his own mouthful, exhaling hard. He can’t exactly avoid talking about this forever, and he is being pretty rude by not introducing them. He glances to the side, up at his husband who’s sipping on some vine tea. The piglin’s ears twitch and he snorts softly as he meets his gaze. Sapnap taps on the table and turns back to his friends with a sheepish grin, they’re going to think he’s joking. “This isn’t my friend, he’s my husband.”

For the second time that day he receives an almost synchronous “WHAT?!” from his friends. Dream seems frozen for a moment, mouth gaping before he slaps the table and bursts out laughing. George is goggling at him in total disbelief before he snorts out a bemused laugh.

Even though he expected this kind of reaction, it still doesn’t make him feel any less mortified, Sapnap ducks his head. He’s painfully aware of the entire dining hall staring at them and his husband pressed next to him.

Dream tries to talk, words broken up by his laughter, “wai-wai-wait... mind saying that again Sapnap?” He wipes a tear away from one eye, still wheezing.

“He’s my husband, I...” Sapnap laughs a little himself, ignoring the fresh burst of laughter he receives and the half-confused chuckles George lets out. Rubbing the back of his neck, he takes a deep breath and continues, “Guys come on, I’m serious. So about like, three weeks ago I was running about the Nether trying to get pearls? And I ran into this dude, “ he jabs his thumb at the piglin, giving him a little smile, “and he was giving me so much good stuff that I kinda.. joked I wanted to marry him.”

He lowered his voice a little on the word ‘joked’ knowing just how volatile the reaction he’d received when he’d used it in front of the elder leader. His husband’s mug clunks to the table and he winces a little. “Well marriage is a pretty sacred thing to these guys so, they brought me here and I was told it was basically that ‘breaking an oath of marriage warrants death’ or something.” Dream’s eyes go wide and his wheezing turns into a surprised half-laugh half-snort. “But this guy said we could make a deal, I’d be his husband for a month and after that if I wanted to leave I could.”

The piglin snorts affirmatively behind him and ruffles his hair affectionately. His friends are

starting to crack up again. “So I signed a contract and got this,” he points to his earring, “and yeah, I’ve been staying here ever since.”

Dream wheezes, almost dislodging his mask as he brushes hair out of his eyes, “you got married?! Sapnap what?! WHAT?!”

George leans closer, eyeing the piglin, “what’s his name?”

Sapnap blinks, glancing between his friends and his husband, “uh..”

“*Sapnap*, you *cannot* be telling us you married someone and have been living with him for weeks without even knowing his name?!” Dream thumps the table and chokes on a fresh burst of laughter. He wrestles with that a moment, George joining him with quieter chuckles before he gasps and tries to calm himself. He turns to the piglin, “what’s your name?”

The piglin shrugs and lets out a short string of snorts, sounding something along the lines of ‘eh uh gh’. Sapnap furrows his brow and tries to copy the specific inflection of the snorts and his husband squeals excitedly, nuzzling his forehead and making him flush, grinning up at him. He notices George mouthing something incredulously to Dream but he’s a little distracted by the press of a clawed thumb stroking his cheek for a moment.

Sapnap coughs and breaks eye contact, gesturing to his friends, “these are my friends from the Overworld, the green one is Dream,” he leans towards his husband with a conspirately loud whisper, “and the one with dorky goggles? That’s George.”

“Hey-” George has started on another plate of meat and mushrooms, pouting at him.

“So uh, nice to meet you-” Dream tries to replicate the snorting sounds and reaches out a hand. The piglin tilts his head and warily pats his hand, huffing softly. Dream chuckles and takes his hand back. “I’m impressed you’ve put up with this dumbass for so long without kicking him out.”

The piglin presses closer to Sapnap with a low rumble that sounds oddly offended. Sapnap feels his hand sneak around his waist, holding him protectively. His cheeks redden before he coughs and puts on a mock-hurt tone, “I’m hurt Dream, is this why you and George left? You just couldn’t stand me?” He can’t keep the last few words getting wobbly from a badly-suppressed laugh.

“Yes,” George speaks with his mouthful, tone completely deadpan.

Dream wheezes, “George, come on.” He leans back and stretches, “nah we just explored further than we ever have before, you should come with us next time Sapnap.”

Sapnap yawns, pressing back into his husband’s torso. “Yeah maybe,” his tone sounds a little off even to his own ears and he tries to brush it off with a laugh. He’s never been very good at analyzing his feelings but he’s feeling.. weird. Why does it feel so jarring to think about leaving?

The dinner is winding down, the piglin servers beginning to collect the plates and bowls from each long table. In pairs and small groups the mob are slowly trickling out, no doubt on their way to their hammocks. His husband pets his back, tilting his head with a questioning little huff. Sapnap nods with a bigger yawn, accidentally leaving a little spit on the back of his hand as he does so.

“I don’t know where you’re gonna be sleeping-” Sapnap starts, turning towards his friends and smiling fondly when he finds Dream with his arm around George, deep in a soft discussion about something. “Fair warning there’s going to be another bell in a minute for bedtime.”

Sapnap grins when the bell sounds out, rather proud of himself for how close he’d gotten. And he’s so used to the ringing that it’s almost a surprise to see George actually cover his ears, yelling over the sound, “how many bells *are* there? And how do your ears still work?!”

As the bell comes to a stop, Sapnap scrunches up his nose a little as he thinks, counting on his fingers, “uh.. Wake up, lunch, dinner and bed? So four? And there’s like the one when you guys showed up so, I guess the humans-are-breaking-our-shit bell makes five.” He laughs and reaches almost unconsciously to find his husband’s hand.

The piglin snorts and gestures to the doorway, regarding him fondly. He feels those familiar flutters in his stomach and he can’t help giving the taller male’s hand a quick squeeze. And then he notices the two brutes gesturing from the doorway.

The brutes follow them towards the bedrooms, watching Dream and George warily. Sapnap gives a tiny wave to the baby piglins as they’re carried into another bedroom, a few of them already fast asleep. His husband ruffles his hair and copies his wave, letting out a soft amused snort.

When they turn into their own bedroom, Sapnap is surprised to see a new hammock erected next to theirs, almost squashed against the wall. “Hey this is your bed,” his words are warped by a yawn

and he gestures blearily towards the hammock to his friends, eyes squeezing closed as he yawns hard.

“There’s only one?” George fiddles with his goggles, brows furrowed. Dream is distracted, blinking around the room at the piglins snuggled in their own hammocks. The few not asleep yet gaze back at him warily and the brute with the smaller piglin husband growls threateningly at him, clawed fingers petting his spouse's back.

Dream backs up, hands raised to show he means no harm. He hesitates before he turns, tilting his head at the hammock, “we don’t get our own?”

Sapnap rubs his eyes, “you guys are a couple right? Share dude.” He shoots them a sleepy grin and reaches out his arms for his husband, the piglin huffing gently as he tugs him into their hammock. Sapnap rests his cheek on his husband’s chest, chuckling a little as he watches Dream and George attempt to climb into their hammock.

It takes them a while, whispered and hissed curses and they both manage to fall out (George twice) but eventually they end up snuggled in the hoglin skin. “I hate this,” George is sprawled over Dream, one arm up over the other’s shoulder and a pout on his face. Sapnap grins to himself when he sees Dream wrap an arm around George, making him melt a little.

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Sapnap stirs, blinking sleepily as the morning bell rings out. He lays there a moment, rubbing his cheek against the soft leather of his husband’s tunic with a little yawn. He can feel the piglin’s heart beating under him and he sighs contentedly when a clawed hand strokes over his hair, tucking strands behind his ear. Sapnap raises his head lazily to meet the piglin’s soft gaze, ignoring the shifting and snorts from around the room as the rest of the piglin’s awaken.

And then they’re both jolted by a loud yell and a heavy thump. Sapnap turns to find Dream on the floor, rubbing his hip with a wince before he looks back up at George. “Hey, you pushed me out you jerk!”

George blinks, goggles all askew on his head and brown hair a mess, he was probably woken up with a start like Sapnap had that first morning. He chuckles and shoots Dream a lopsided grin, “well, you *were* hogging the whole hammock anyway,” when he receives a rather rude response from Dream he stretches and drawls out a “crybaby.”

There are disapproving snorts and huffs from around the room, the piglins giving the two humans, especially George, glances that indicate they take a dim look at his actions. The smaller piglin with the brute husband actually tut-tuts softly before he goes back to straightening his husband's collar affectionately.

Sapnap rolls out of their hammock, landing on the floor with relative ease from practice. He reaches out a hand almost immediately to help tug his husband up. The piglin wiggles his ears and brings his hand up to nuzzle it briefly before letting him go. He brings his hand back to his side, feeling the skin tingle and his heart race. His husband, to his surprise, reaches down to give Dream a hand and tugs the human to his feet.

"Thanks man, I appreciate it," Dream gives the piglin a nod before he goes back to George. Sapnap knows their banter is just affection, George is especially cagey about his feelings and tends to express them in jokes.

He leans against the nearest chest as his husband opens theirs. His hands fly to his hair, trying to smooth it down a little and sort out the bandana. What he wouldn't give for a comb, he feels so much more conscious of his appearance with his friend's here. The piglin straightens with his apron and gloves, and carefully balanced on top-

"Oh dude I forgot! Thanks for keeping it safe," he grins at the sight of his flame buckle and his husband huffs out a laugh before he gestures him closer. Sapnap offers to hold his apron and gloves and he allows the piglin to wrap the belt around his waist. His hands are soft, adjusting the black leather and tightening it just enough that it won't fall. Sapnap watches his hands, larger than his own but ever so careful with him and his cheeks heat up just a little.

Almost too soon the taller male draws back and offers him a soft smile. Sapnap grins back and reaches for his shoulder, ushering him to bend a little so he can help him with his heavy apron. He leaves the gloves for now, the piglin doesn't like to eat in them.

He glances over to his friends, George is down from the hammock and busy adjusting his shirt and stretching. Dream is giving them an odd little smile though, leaning against the wall and tapping his fingers on the blackstone. Sapnap offers him a shrug and an awkward laugh, rubbing the back of his neck as he makes his way to the door. "So, breakfast?"

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"Oh my god is this strider meat? It's so good?" Dream speaks through a mouthful. The breakfast that morning was fried mushrooms and thin strips of fried strider meat, similar to bacon. The

masked man swallows his mouthful and tabs another piece with his fork. “You really weren’t lying.”

Sapnap snorts, savoring his own mouthful. “What, you thought I was lying? Dream, I would never lie.” He wheezes at his friend’s expression, the falseness of his solemn tone is obvious.

“Unrelated but I’ve been meaning to ask, what’s with the belt? And where’s your hoodie?” Dream’s lips quirk into that weird little smile again for a brief moment as he glances between Sapnap and the piglin next to him, before easing into a familiar lazy grin.

Sapnap can’t help glancing down at the gold buckle, heart fluttering as he rubs his thumb over the surface lovingly. “Damn you should have seen me Dream, we got in a fight with hoglins and I destroyed those guys,” he grins and feels a snorted laugh from beside him. He rubs the back of his neck with a laugh of his own, “hey! I did kill one!” he turns back to his friends and puffs his chest, “I’ve got mad skills. My hoodie got torn to hell though, so…” he swallows, cocky grin melting into a softer smile, “he like, crafted this for me.”

There’s a soft snort from the piglin and when he glances over he sees his husband fiddling with his meal, his cheeks oddly flushed. He nudges the taller male with his elbow gently, giving him a lopsided smirk, “I’m snazzy now! He’s a talented guy, aren’t you?” Sapnap feels his heart beat a little faster when the piglin’s ears start twitching and his face goes even more pink. His husband can’t seem to meet his eyes and Sapnap opens his mouth, ready to insist the guy take the compliment when George interrupts him.

“You’re a blacksmith or something? That’s some detailed work there.” George adjusts his goggles, squinting down at Sapnap’s waist. The piglin takes a deep breath and nods, turning towards them. George smirks and leans back a little, “that’s good, ‘cause Sapnap tends to break stuff a lot.”

“Hey-!” Sapnap sends his friend a scowl, hunching over a little in his seat.

Dream lays a hand on his shoulder with a soft laugh, “George be nice, he breaks stuff *sometimes*.” He steals a slice of strider meat from George’s plate, making the brunette pout. “Oh I was gonna talk more about the settlement we found? It’s a real weird bunch but they’re friendly, there’s one dude though, this kinda political-ish leader named Wilbur? He’s so dramatic or whatever, but I like him.”

Sapnap takes in how animated his friend is, hands moving rapidly as he speaks. “You gonna settle there huh?” Dream and George have a house near his own back in the Overworld, they’d worked on it for months, there’s a secret basement with passages that lead to his smaller house and all the

way into a mineshaft they'd discovered while mining. They shared crops and animals and would sit watching the sunset while fishing.

His friends had been mentioning missing their more nomadic lifestyle before they settled in that location though, when they'd travelled through villages and through the Overworld and been meeting new people and having adventures. So he's not that surprised that they want to leave for somewhere new. Still, the idea of leaving for anywhere makes his stomach clench anxiously. Sarnap tries to swallow it down, "that sounds cool, I-"

The bell signalling the end of breakfast rings out, interrupting him (though honestly he's not sure what he had been going to say). As the last chime of the bell echoes, the dining hall fills with the noise of plates being stacked, the shuffle of feet and snorts as the remaining piglins ready for their daily activities.

Sarnap hears his husband get up and he turns to find him standing still, gloves in his hands and glancing between the door and his friends. The piglin seems... worried. Sarnap frowns, wondering if he doesn't fully trust the other humans yet and doesn't want to leave him alone. He gets to his feet, yawning a little and stretching.

"Hey, you good?" He moves closer and reaches out to pat the piglin's arm. His husband meets his eyes and his head tilts a little, a soft huff his only response. Sarnap snorts out a little laugh, "hey I'll be fine yeah? I'm just gonna show them around a bit and then meet you for lunch." He realizes he's petting the piglin's arm and he draws his hand back with a blush and a slightly embarrassed laugh.

His husband exhales, the one ear with the bite mark twitching as he slowly pulls on his gloves. The piglin casts one last look at his friends and at the two familiar brutes waiting by the door for them. He turns back to Sarnap and nods, a hand reaching out to brush his cheek and the gold ring in his ear. Sarnap can't help the way his stomach flutters or the way he leans into the touch a little.

"So uh, see you later yeah?" His grin is a little wobbly, he feels all tongue-tied. His husband pats his shoulder and nods, snorting gently as he walks towards the doorway. Sarnap offers him a wave and settles his hands on his hips, he misses his pockets. "So, wanna have the grand tour?" he grins at his friends.

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The brutes follow them through the halls as they make their way around. Sarnap is surprised by how well he knows his way around now, he doesn't even need to drag his self-made map out of his

inventory. He shows them the main areas and describes some of the daily life of the Bastion. He's reminded, as they peek into the library, of the last time he'd been there. He flushes a little in mortification, incredibly glad the librarian isn't anywhere in sight. He hasn't been back there since but he does miss the calm atmosphere.

Dream and George ask him a bunch of questions and he does his best to answer them. Sometimes he finds himself turning to the brutes behind them to confirm if he's right. They're more receptive to his questions, offering him sharp snorts and nods, rather than the silence when Dream and George attempt to engage them.

"Oh yeah, there's stuff down below too, like a leather mill and a giant bath." Sapnap runs a hand along the blackstone wall behind them, they're paused by a gash in the wall that opens to the Nether. He barks out a laugh when his friends whirl around to interrogate him.

"Sapnap, that's *water*, you get that right? We're in the *Nether* ." George raises an eyebrow, tone a little taunting, like he's dumb.

He can't help scoffing, internally a little gleeful that he can one up George. "Yeah but the piglins have worked out how to use iron to summon large quantities of water." He gestures with his hands to try and convey how large the bath actually was, "guys you have *got* to see the bath down there, it's huge, I've never seen anything like it!"

Out of the corner of his eye he notices movement and Sapnap turns to find two baby piglins peering at them curiously from around the corner up ahead. He smiles and waves at them and the smaller one gestures at his friends and then beckons at them, squealing excitedly. Sapnap chuckles, "you want us to come over huh?"

The brutes follow them very closely as they approach the children. Dream takes notice and hangs back a bit, grabbing George's arm to keep him close. The group of baby piglins are drawing with chalk again and Sapnap squats down so one can hand him a piece of chalk.

The baby piglin snorts and points to his friends with a clawed finger and he glances at his friends with a grin. "Oh yeah! These are my friends, the ones I told you all about." He cups his mouth and mock-whispers to them, "hey I told them you're cool, do something cool guys."

Dream wheezes out a laugh and moves closer, kneeling down himself. He glances back to check the brutes are still calm before he outstretches his hand, palm up. "Pass the chalk Sap," When he has it in his hand he regards the children, all regarding the two new humans in curiosity and excitement. "Did Sapnap tell you about the dragon?"

When the baby piglins shake their little heads, their ears twitching adorably, his friend chuckles and starts drawing on the floor. None of them have much artistic skill, but Sarnap will grudgingly admit Dream's rendition of a dragon isn't half bad. They've only gotten to the End a few times and they've never defeated her.

Dream starts explaining what a dragon is and starts detailing their adventures in the End. George interjects at points, kneeling next to him and adding the towers and end crystals. Sarnap watches as they recreate the End, grinning as he notices the gaggle of baby piglins move closer to watch.

His friends bicker a little over who did what whilst telling the story and Sarnap leans back against the wall, grinning at them. A baby piglin toddles over to him and gestures to his head. He leans down curiously and little clawed hands pat at his bandana. He unties it with a chuckle and offers it to the child, who immediately starts trying to wrap it around their head.

Sarnap snorts out a little laugh and reaches out to gently tie it properly, minding the baby piglin's ears. The child squeals with and rushes over to the piglin brutes, who have made their way over and are kneeling very close to where Dream and George are to keep an eye on them. They soften a little when the little one clambers on top of them, the ends of the bandana swinging in the air as the child tries to clamber up to one of the brute's shoulders.

"Dream, *what* are you doing?" George's amused voice distracts him and Sarnap turns to look. He can't help barking out a laugh himself, Dream has two baby piglins sitting on his back as he crawls about on all fours, making dragon-ish noises. It's both hilarious and adorable.

He remembers the brutes a moment but when he glances to check on them he finds them, still kneeling, observing warily but without any hostility. He breathes a sigh of relief and watches Dream jokingly wobble, making the children squeak and grip his green hoodie tighter before they snort out little giggles.

He brushes the hair out of his eyes and presses his hands to the floor. "Hey, hey Dream, imagine if there were two dragons?" The remaining baby piglins, watching excitedly for their turn on the strange green human, turn to him with happy excited squeals and snorts and he can't help laughing as George rolls his eyes at the both of them.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Uh, I'm so sorry I don't have any excuse for this being 2 months late, I've been a little out of it. Thank you all for your patience and sweet comments and support, I will try to be better.

I also made a Tumblr in case anyone wants to submit anything to me (or see my silly moodboards and probably doodles I draw sdfsf) <https://bastionlovers.tumblr.com/>

Sapnap stretches, his back clicking. His husband has paused to talk to one of the other toolsmiths, the both of them gesturing emphatically with their hands. They're on their way to the library, he was originally going to drag George and Dream with them but during lunch they'd started yawning and decided to head back to their hammock for a nap. Sapnap can understand, his body took a while to get in sync with the mob's routine, especially when he first arrived and was adjusted to the night and day of the Overworld.

He can't help watching the piglin as he talks, he's noticed how tense his husband has been around his friends and he's not completely certain what the other is thinking. His first assumption was that his husband was afraid he'd leave and that feels like some of it... but Sapnap suspects there's more to it.

The conversation trails off, the other toolsmith making his way down the hallway with a final snort. Sapnap slips closer to his husband's side, hand brushing his arm as he beams up at him, "still up for visiting the library big guy?" The taller male nods and offers his hand which Sapnap doesn't hesitate to take. He's honestly a little nervous to see the librarian again, he's kind of mortified by what went down the last time they were there.

It's less painful than he's expecting, the librarian just fixes them with a look, pointedly more towards his husband as though daring the other piglin to repeat his previous actions. His husband snorts apologetically, appearing chastened. The librarian huffs and rolls his eyes, waving them into the library. Sapnap is buzzing a little at the thought of spending time with his husband here, there's a few concepts in the books he finds confusing.

It's so cozy sitting side by side on the soft mats and picking books from the shelves. The taller male chooses a selection, glancing back at him as his claws hover over the leather spine of each book and waiting for him to nod or shake his head. "Hey can you get that one about the Fortresses? Yeah that one! Thanks dude," Sapnap grins as he's handed the book, their hands brushing softly.

As they settle, his husband sets the teetering tower of books on the floor in front of them. Sapnap can't help chuckling a little as the piglin takes a moment to straighten it, the tip of his tongue poking out in concentration as he makes sure each book is aligned carefully. He opens the book in his lap and waits for his husband to lean back by his side before he turns to him. "So, wanna read a little together?"

The piglin smiles behind his tusks and pulls out his leather-bound notebook and thin stick of charcoal from his inventory. Sapnap feels his stomach do a little flip, the book is full of little notes and diagrams and his husband often uses it to explain things he's struggling to convey in gestures. But he's also caught a glimpse of the piglin sketching him in there once and the memory makes him flustered and warm.

He shakes himself from the thought and for a long while they sit while he reads softly, stumbling over his words a little when he comes to complicated words. He laughs it off and leans into the taller male. His husband never seems bothered and he leans over his shoulder to point out specific lines, snorting gently. Sapnap yawns contentedly as they close the book on Fortresses. He'd asked the piglin if he's ever been in one and the other had wheezed in bemusement, shaking his head.

And then he'd mentioned that his friends and he had visited a couple of Fortresses, going into detail about the loot found there and battling with blazes. His husband had given him increasingly concerned looks and when he mentioned Wither skeletons the piglin had actually shuddered before growling, wrapping an arm around him protectively. Sapnap rubs the back of his neck, "yeah trust me, I haven't any plans to go back in one any time soon." His husband looks unconvinced but just sighs, rolling his eyes.

The piglin lifts the top book from the pile and holds it out with a tilt of his head, a soft questioning squeal trailing from his lips. Sapnap notices it's one about metalwork and he grins teasingly, "oh you wanna tell me all about your *mad skills* bro?" When the piglin flushes he laughs and nods, patting the taller's shoulder good-naturedly, "yeah! Let's read!"

Some of it goes right over his head but he loves how excited the piglin becomes, making a point to ask more questions as his husband seems to be buzzing to tell him all about his work. He feels his heart pound when the piglin gets lost in an explanation, gesturing enthusiastically while snorting practically to himself. He can't understand much, though he's surprised he can actually grasp a few snorts, or at least the general intention behind them.

The piglin seems to realize he's ranting to himself and blushes, glancing first down at him before turning to find the librarian shooting them a dry look. He slumps, ears drooping as he rubs his upper arm, looking completely contrite. Sapnap can't help his low laugh, he looks adorable. "Aww you're cute when you get excited, you know that?"

The piglin gives him a startled look, cheeks flushing and he hurriedly grabs a new book off the tower, burying his face in it. Sarnap decides to be nice and not point out that the book appears to be upside down, instead taking a new book for himself. They're quiet a moment before he decides to ask a completely different question, one that's been on his mind since he started reading more and more of the piglins' texts.

"Hey, I noticed that like, in every book everything is neutral? Like everything is 'they'?" He has no idea if he's making any sense but his husband sets his book to the lap, tilting his head before nodding in understanding.

Sarnap swallows and lets out an awkward giggle, "so uh, okay if this is rude tell me yeah?" The piglin nods again, appearing a little bemused. "I'm guessing that it might.. be different for piglins. Are you a boy or a girl?"

His husband taps his chin thoughtfully before he huffs out one of his laughs and holds out his hand, making a so-so gesture he's borrowed from Sarnap. He blinks, trying to work out what the piglin means, "kind of both, or neither?" he offers, hoping he's asking this right.

The piglin nods with another little laugh, holding up two fingers, snorting goodnaturedly.

And Sarnap is at both relieved that he's not offended at all, and also worried, "oh so, second option?.. Uh, is it okay if I still call you my husband then?"

His husband snorts happily, giving him an enthusiastic thumbs up, which makes him crack up despite himself. A large hand ruffles his hair and the piglin raises a new book, tilting his head quizzically. Sarnap nods with a smile and shuffles closer, leaning into his husband's shoulder a little as the piglin points to some ink illustrations of Nether flora within the book.

He's actually skimmed through this book before on his own, but there's something so nice about listening to the piglin snort softly as he trails his claws over the carefully inked fungi and vines. Sarnap can feel the warmth of his husband, the press of their bodies as the other adjusts the book and he can't help glancing up at him from the corner of his eye.

He finds his eyes following the curve of his jaw, the softness of his cheek and then to the piglin's lips. He remembers that brief feel of them against his own and his lips tingle. Sarnap swallows, heat flushing through his face as his mind ponders on what that mouth might feel like in a deeper kiss, or pressed to his neck, the piglin being oh so careful with his tusks, or even... he coughs and looks back down at the book hurriedly, face burning.

A couple of clawed fingers brush through the strands of hair that always fall in his eyes, the piglin giving a questioning little huff. Sapnap lifts his head, turning a little to meet his husband's gaze. The taller male shifts and he notices the book slipping from the corner of his eye, hand darting out to try and grab it-

His husband lets out a shocked noise when he grabs the other's thigh instead. Sapnap stares wide-eyed down at his hand, feeling the thin leather shorts and the soft firmness below them. And he flushes as he fights with the sudden urge to *squeeze*, letting out a shaky little laugh and lifting his head to apologise and draw his hand back.

The apology catches on his lips, the piglin is flushed and staring down at where his hand is resting. And when he finally raises his head there's a look in his husband's eyes that makes him shiver, heart pounding in his chest. His husband's eyes roam over his face, gold pupils coming to rest on his lips and Sapnap bites his lip without thinking, his throat dry. The piglin swallows audibly, leaning a little closer-

A sudden crash startles them both and they whirl around to see a piglin at the door. The piglin, somewhat familiar, had bumped the side of the iron bucket he was carrying into the doorway, splashing water on the floor. It's already steaming and slowly starting to evaporate. Sapnap pulls his hand back like he's been burned and his husband shifts back a little. The librarian stalks forwards, hands on his hips as he regards the newcomer.

The piglin, dressed in an apron on top of the standard tunic and shorts, sets down the bucket with a soft clang and spins the mop with one hand as though it's some kind of fighting staff. He's actually pretty good, Sapnap realizes he can probably handle a sword incredibly well. The piglin pauses, in an exaggerated stance that looks more goofy than anything and he seems to know it too as he's grinning.

Sapnap is expecting the librarian to get annoyed but a smile is tugging at his lips and he leans forwards to nuzzle the other piglin, snout to snout. And then he realizes why he seems familiar, especially when he sees the matching gold ring in the newcomer's ear, it's the librarian's spouse. He'd seen them together at the bath.

He feels a flicker of almost-jealousy and has to distract himself, turning to find his husband flushed and turned pointedly away as he gathers up the books. Sapnap swallows and grabs a book to pass to him, helping him set them back on the shelves. The piglin offers him a shy smile and Sapnap grins, whatever tension had been in the air melting.

As the days pass the mob become less agitated by the presence of his friends and the baby piglins attaching themselves to Dream like little limpets help with that. They spend time at the archery range, the library and exploring the Bastion. Sapnap knows most of the place now, but there's a few places he's not ventured to, down below.

They discover, to their slight discomfort, that there is in fact a dungeon at the very base of the Bastion, though it looks like the cells are long unused, a thin layer of dust over everything. Sapnap wonders to himself, if he'd refused the marriage contract, would he be imprisoned there. The thought makes him shudder and he finds himself wondering just what his husband saw in him that first day, he'd protected him from harm when they'd not even known each other for an entire day.

As they visit more places within the Bastion, Sapnap finds himself translating and relaying messages to his friends and is surprised at himself. Sure a great deal of it is just guesswork and just having spent longer with the mob, but he does understand some of the grunts and snorts of the piglin language, and he'd barely noticed before because it just happened so naturally.

He realizes he's much more hyper aware of his friends body language too. He's become so accustomed to reading every little movement and gesture and it's odd to see how much his friends reveal without even being aware of it. George especially, since Dream is much more open in many ways (there's a reason the guy wears a mask, he sucks at reigning in his facial expressions). Watching George is fascinating, his friend is the most private of the three of them, the best at a poker face. It's funny to see the tiny shifts in his body language, and the way he echoes Dream's movements so subtly.

The next recreational afternoon, as Sapnap's taken to calling them, rolls around. Sapnap sits next to his husband of course, and he doesn't even notice that he's practically snuggling him until George points it out. He puts a little space between them with an embarrassed laugh, rubbing the back of his neck. His friends are as fascinated and curious as he'd been the first few times, taking in the chaos that is the hall. Dream pauses in gazing around the busy room to give him that odd little smile again before he turns and addresses his husband with a lazier grin. "So, what's the game they're playing? Can we join in or..?"

The piglin snorts good-naturedly, it seems like he's mellowed to the masked human a little. Sapnap assumes he has some kind of issue because he and Dream tend to be more physically affectionate, whereas George is not especially touchy (Dream is an exception and usually instigates that contact). His husband stands and gestures for them to follow him over to the table where the group of piglins are playing.

The table erupts into snorts of cheer when a piglin gets his last stone across the board, his opponent

huffs and rolls his eyes before begrudgingly reaching into his inventory, passing the winning piglin a few gold bars. Sapnap leans against the table as his husband leans in to talk to the current winner, gesturing back at his friends. The victor nods and sets about rearranging the game pieces, each carefully painted stone set back either side of the board.

Dream slides onto the bench, tugging George with him. The crowd around the table waits with anticipation as the winning piglin snorts, assessing the two humans. He gestures to the board and holds up a stone, the piglin face visible. He demonstrates pushing it across the board. Dream leans closer and taps on the pieces on their side. "You have to get to the other side, and push your opponent off the board first? Oh, a little like chess huh?"

The piglin nods with a squeal and pulls his stone back to its original place, gesturing that the human can move first. Sapnap leans against his husband's side and watches. Dream's first few moves are confused and clumsy and his opponent is luckily a good sport, patient as George and Dream work out the mechanics of the game. Sapnap isn't surprised when they get the gist of it quickly though, his friends are good at this sort of thing.

They still lose the first game of course and Dream gets competitive and sore over it of course. He can't help chuckling when Dream demands another round, and then another. George takes little light-hearted jabs at his boyfriend, among some decent tips of course. Sapnap leans against his husband, watching as his friends move a wither skeleton stone across the board, "I'm glad they don't actually.. you know, *wither* you here too." He laughs at himself and the piglin offers him a soft snort of laughter, a hand pressing to his shoulder.

Eventually Dream actually beats the piglin and ends up winning some gold, this just makes him even more competitive and George has gotten more involved, a couple of piglins forcing the previous victor to scooch up the bench so they can challenge the two humans to a game.

Sapnap stretches shaking his head with a grin, at this rate his friends are going to be at it for hours. He turns to his husband and finds the piglin staring towards the farthest table, where a pot of steaming soup has been brought out from the kitchen. He seems to register Sapnap's gaze and turns to him with an inquisitive snort, one ear twitching.

"Are you hungry?" Sapnap's stomach squeezes a little with the first pangs of hunger as the scent of mushroom soup floats across the room. He pats the piglin's stomach gently and almost as though on cue his stomach rumbles. "I knew it!" He laughs when his husband blushes, "come on then, let's go eat."

They grab bowls of soup and find a quieter table to watch the game from afar. Sapnap looks away from his friends to look up at his husband a moment, breathing on his soup to cool it. The piglin gives him a fond look and it makes his heart leap. He flushes a little before taking a slurp of soup,

eyes trailing back to where Dream is shoving a stone forwards, before he yells triumphantly. “Dork,” he can’t help chuckling out around his spoon, shaking his head.

His eyes dart around the room, it’s as chaotic as it usually is, the game table busy of course, and the familiar trading corner, and to add to the din, there’s a band in the room. They have drums made from hoglin skin and shroomlights and it’s surprising how softly they’re playing, a gentle background sound for a percussion band. He finds himself nodding his head to the beat a little, still sipping his soup.

It’s so unbelievably cosy, he leans into his husband and the piglin snorts gently, a hand pressing to his shoulder. The gaggle of baby piglins run past them, they’re tugging along a cart made from fungi ‘wood’ with one of the smallest children inside. He can’t help giving them a wave, laughing outright when he sees a concerned brute rushing after them.

Dream and George eventually make their way over and plonk down next to them. George has a bundle of items they obviously won and Dream is sporting the widest smile. “Did you see us Sapnap? We kicked ass.”

“Did you leave them with any gold left Dream? Worst guests ever, they’re not going to invite you over again bro,” Sapnap playfully punches his friend in the shoulder and laughs and Dream joins in with his familiar wheeze.

To their surprise, George hefts up his armful of loot and addresses Sapnap’s husband with a half-smile, “so, can I trade some of this over there?” He jerks his head towards the table where piglins are excitedly bantering over their trades. The piglin rubs his chin before he shrugs and nods, briefly ruffling Sapnap’s hair as he gestures the small brunet to follow him

Sapnap puts a hand to his head, knowing he’s smiling like a complete dork. His cheeks are flushed and his heart is racing. He fiddles with his empty soup pot a moment before stacking it in his husband’s and pushing it to the middle of the table.

“You like him, don’t you?” Dream’s voice is soft, and Sapnap only just hears it over the loudness of the room. He turns to his friend, brows furrowed in confusion. The man smiles, and before he can ask who he’s referring to, Dream’s nods towards his husband, already busy with apparently introducing George to the table of piglins haggling with one another.

Sapnap raises an eyebrow at his friend, smiling back in confusion, “I mean, yeah, of course I like him?”

Dream rubs his face with his hand and his smile grows, “Sapnap come on, I can tell you’re in love.”

He freezes like a bucket of ice has been thrown over him, he wasn’t expecting that. “What?! No I- Dream, *Dream*- ” He’s suddenly babbling, there’s something terrifying in having the words spoken out loud.

Dream presses a hand to his shoulder, shuffling a little closer. “Sapnap, calm down, it’s okay?” He laughs, a gentle familiar chuckle that eases some of the tightness in his stomach. “Take a big breath for me bro, yeah?” He waits for him to take a few shaky deep breaths before continuing, “come on Sapnap, I’ve known you for how long? Since we were kids right? And I’ve never ever, and I mean *ever* , seen you look at anyone like you look at the guy.”

Sapnap swallows and sneaks a glance over at the piglin in question, his cheeks flushing a little as he watches him demonstrate how the bartering works to the brunet. “I... I dunno..” he can’t deny his friend’s words, he’s just not a guy who analyzes his feelings often.

“I don’t want to mess things up, what if he doesn’t like me back? And then there’s you guys and I don’t, fuck Dream, do I stay here and never see you both again? Or do I leave him behind...? That’s... *fuck* .” He sighs and rubs his face, his throat tight.

Dream hums thoughtfully and pats his shoulder again, “hey, we can work out something, we could build a portal nearby, you think even if you wanted to stay permanently we wouldn’t come visit you like, all the time?” He grins and then he sighs himself, a deep exhale, “take it from me, love is worth taking a chance. And this guy is.. Sapnap this guy *adores* you, like he’d go grab the moon for you or something.”

Sapnap flushes in embarrassment and elbows his friend, “shut up!” he wants to bury his grinning face in his hands, feeling ridiculously giddy. And then his smile falls when a memory tugs at his mind, “I dunno Dream, I.. heh.. I tried to kiss him before and he didn’t take it so well.” He drops his hands to his pants and fiddles with the fabric.

Dream tilts his head, his eyes widening briefly, before he glances over at the piglin before turning back to him with a bemused look, “you kissed him? What happened exactly dude?”

Sapnap finds his fingers subconsciously sliding towards the belt buckle and he gives an awkward laugh, “well so, this was after the whole hoglin thing? I’d told him my hoodie was important to me

and was bummed about it? It was a bit after that, he dragged me into this deserted hallway and handed me this? Like the guy obviously went and made it just for me..." he taps the buckle, seeing Dream is following his words.

"And I dunno, I was.. it made me so emotional Dream I don't know, I just pulled him down into a kiss. And I thought he was gonna kiss me back, like he was leaning down and shit.. but then he pulled back and just nuzzled my forehead and man, I was so embarrassed, you don't even know." It feels mortifying to admit, he still kind of feels like he messed up with that.

Dream is quiet for a moment and Sapnap turns to find him studying first his husband, and then the piglins around the room, before pressing his fingers to his chin. "So he.. gave you something right?"

Sapnap gives him a dry look, "uh yeah, that's what I just said Dream."

His friend grins and ruffles his hair, "shush I'm theorizing out loud... I have a hunch, could be wrong but I have one, wanna hear it?" He waits for Sapnap to nod before he continues, "so piglins, like bartering is a part of their culture, especially with people from the Overworld right?.. Well maybe he was worried you thought you needed to barter something for the gold buckle?" He chuckles suddenly, as though he's a little embarrassed, "like.. sexual favors?"

"Dream?!" Sapnap can't help jerking back a little, sure his hot face must be scarlet. "Li-listen you can't just *say* that?!" The thought is making his brain short circuit. He tries to shove aside a few thoughts that really aren't suitable to be having around his friend and instead focuses on the sudden relief. "Oh, if it was that.. that's better, I kinda thought I'd fucked up and made him grossed out or something, I don't know if he's into humans you know?"

Dream snorts, "Sapnap, I'm expecting you to cuss me out for this but, listen," he says in between barely contained wheezes, "your husband really, *really* wants to fuck you, and I'm losing my mind with how obvious it is."

Sapnap just gapes at the man for a moment before he jerks away with a flustered sound, almost falling off the bench. He wants to yell at him but there's so many piglins sending confused glances their way and he doesn't want to alert his husband right now. It's mortifying having his best friend point that out and he hunches over, glancing over to check his husband isn't looking over. He doesn't know if Dream is bullshitting him, but this isn't the time or place for that conversation. He tries to focus, "so you think he likes me back? Like a lot? And you're okay with that right?"

"Yeah!" Dream grins and ruffles his hair again, "what kind of friend would I be if I didn't support

you finding love too? I just want you to *tell him* ! And me and George, we're gonna be your friends no matter what you decide."

Sapnap can't help the bubble of Joy inside him, he swings an arm around his friend for a moment to squish him in a short half-hug, before he bangs on the table. "I'm gonna tell him!"

"Yesss! Go get him!" Dream mimics his banging, his voice loud with encouragement. "I'm rooting for you!" He offers him a double thumbs up and Sapnap feels a burst of bravery, leaping to his feet. He's not going to overthink this, he's just going to do it.

The room around him seems a blur as he walks over to where his husband is still talking, he feels a rush of fondness, the piglin is so cute when he's excited. He swallows down a flicker of nerves, feeling Dream's eyes on his back, reaching out to press his fingers to the piglin's arm. "Hey-"

His husband pauses with a start, turning to him with a questioning sound. His expression softens almost immediately and Sapnap feels his stomach flip. He slides his hand down the piglin's arm and entwines their fingers, mustering up every bit of confidence he can. "Hey, can you come with me for a minute? I uh-" he falters a moment when he sees the rest of the group and George watching him.

George meets his gaze and then he raises an eyebrow, giving one of his enigmatic smiles. And he turns to the piglins around the table and leans over to ask, "hey can someone else explain why fire charge is so common?"

Sapnap breathes a tiny sigh of relief and meets his husband's eyes, "I wanna talk to you, if that's okay?"

His husband squeezes his hand very gently and nods with a curious smile, ears twitching a little. Sapnap hopes his confidence doesn't fail him, he tugs the piglin towards the large doors and notices Dream edging towards George, his friend flashing him another thumbs up of encouragement.

They end up in a familiar corridor, the same one his husband had gifted him the buckle. Sapnap exhales, it feels suddenly very quiet with just the two of them and the sound of the hall muffled through the doors. The piglin gives a gentle curious snort and presses clawed fingers gently to his shoulder.

Sapnap swallows and offers him a shaky smile, the nerves are creeping in. "I uh.. I need to tell you something..." he can't help the strained laugh, rubbing the back of his neck. He hasn't let go of the piglin's hand. "I'm not good with words, sorry."

His husband squeezes his hand and nods patiently. His heart is pounding in his chest, stomach twisting with excitement and anxiety. Sapnap lets out another nervous little giggle and steels himself, he *has* to know if the piglin feels the same. His words come out in a rush, like he's popped a balloon, "so I know this is started because I made a joke and this was a contract at first.. but I... I think I love you?"

There's a stunned silence and he can't meet the piglin's gaze, voice still fast as he tries to word his thoughts, "and I wasn't sure 'cause I've never been in love before you know? But you make me so happy dude, like really *really* happy, like happy in a way I never knew I could feel. I just want to make you happy too and be with you all the time and kiss you and be your husband and.. yeah," he trails off into an awkward cough, his cheeks burning. He's practically breathless from the admission, not just from speaking so fast.

Clawed fingers very softly curl around his chin and tilt his head up. He meets his husband's gaze, the piglin is flushed, fangs digging into his bottom lip as he regards him. Sapnap is shocked to see the other trembling a little and then he snorts, nodding emphatically. He gently tugs their entwined hands upwards and uses both hands, Sapnap feels them shaking just a little, to press Sapnap's fingers over his heart.

Sapnap swallows, faintly feeling the piglin's heart beating fast. He can't help the excited grin, "you too huh?" He wishes he was better with words, he's so uneloquent. His husband nods again, pressing his hand over the one on his chest. "I love you," it's becoming easier to say, and makes him feel incredibly giddy.

The piglin presses his free hand to his face and Sapnap shivers when a thumb brushes across his cheek, very close to his lips. He can't help blurting, voice almost a whisper, "please, just kiss me."

His husband snorts very softly, the tip of his tongue brushing over his bottom lip so briefly and then he leans down, hesitantly, like expects Sapnap to bolt at any moment. The first press of their lips is chaste, a little awkward with the snout and Sapnap tilts his head, free hand wrapping around his husband's shoulder. He presses their mouths together again, barely caring about the tusks as he kisses the piglin once more.

His husband's hands slide down his back, the piglin deepening the kiss. Sapnap can't help the soft moan as he parts his lips and feels the first touch of tongue. It feels so good to kiss him, his mind already getting fluffy. Hands slide down his back and he gasps into the piglin's mouth as he's lifted up and pressed up against the wall.

He wraps his legs around the other's waist instinctively, his heart pounding at how close they are, at the feel of his husband's tongue exploring his mouth. And then the piglin draws back, leaving both of them panting and a tiny string of spit connecting them. His husband's eyes are full of need and Sapnap shivers, he's sure he looks just as far gone.

The piglin leans forwards again and he moans when those tusks press carefully to his neck, lips and fangs pressing to the skin there, not breaking the skin but oh, he's going to have marks there later. He arches back a little, gasping when the other sucks hard on the skin, his whole body thrumming with heat.

The sounds of voices and footsteps down the hall has them both freezing. His husband exhales against his neck and Sapnap shivers, biting back a gasp. The piglin shakily draws back and sets him down on his feet, though he keeps his arms wrapped around him. Sapnap feels his chest rumble as the piglin growls softly in annoyance, the group of piglins passing by the corridor without noticing them.

Sapnap looks up at him and his husband blushes, looking a little flustered and he can't help grinning shyly, feeling giddy and frustrated all at once. He hadn't wanted to stop. He tugs the piglin down for another chaste kiss, loving how flustered his husband looks after, flushed with his ears drooping a little. He looks adorable.

The bell for night time rings, startling them both. As the doors of the main hall open and they start to hear more footsteps the piglin lets him go, though his hand sneaks down to grasp his. He turns towards the hall with an expression that Sapnap's certain is the piglin equivalent of a pout and Sapnap can't help nudging him, his tone teasing, "guess we'll have to kiss more tomorrow huh?"

His husband turns to him and flushes, his lips quirking into a smile and Sapnap feels his stomach do a happy little flip. God he loves this dude so much.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I know it's been so long and I am incredibly and so very sorry for that, things got a bit overwhelming for a while. Thank you to everyone for your patience, for your sweet comments, for your amazing fanart and being so wonderful and supportive. I promise to do my best not to go silent for so long again.

** Warnings for sexual content in this chapter **

Sapnap is convinced fate has it in for him in some way. It had taken so much of his courage to confess his feelings to his husband and he's still so giddy that the piglin feels the same. They've shared a few chaste kisses where they can, both of them pulling back before it gets too heated because they've not had any real privacy since. And he's not sure how to even approach how he wants to go further, he wants... he's not exactly certain, he just wants *more*. It kind of scares him how much he wants, it's as though their first kiss has stoked a fire inside him and made every touch so much more charged.

And he's pretty sure he's not the only one, his husband keeps giving him these *looks* that make his heart pound. They're dancing around each other, all the subtle (and not so subtle) touches as before but there's this underlying edge that makes him flustered and a little more flirty. He wonders if they're being insufferable, from George's unimpressed looks and the amused grins from Dream he deduces that they are.

He can't be too mad though, Dream and George seem fully supportive of his unorthodox relationship, though the teasing had increased tenfold when he'd admitted that they'd finally kissed. Not to mention when they'd noticed the hickies on his neck, George laughing at him as he tried to tug up the tunic over his neck ineffectively while flushing.

His friends had discovered a book in the library, one of the ancient tomes he'd never ventured towards, and found magic that might actually allow a piglin to visit the Overworld. It was a complex mixture of potions, using ingredients from both the Nether and surprisingly the Overworld too, and only appeared to allow the piglin who ingested them to remain in the Overworld for a few days.

Nevertheless, the idea that he could actually bring his husband to his world, even briefly, and show him all the wonders there, well Sarnap couldn't let that opportunity go to waste. He wanted to show him the stars, the ocean, maybe even the snow and ice? It might depend on how far they could travel within the constraints of the time. He brings it up to his husband, showing him the book excitedly and the piglin reads it through curiously.

He seems equally nervous and eager and ropes the librarian in to look over the text. Sarnap pretends he's not wrapping his arm around his husband's waist while the other piglin huffs and studies the book. The librarian's eyes actually widen briefly before his expression settles into something more subdued.

He looks between them both before turning the ancient book around and pressing his claws to the pages. Sarnap blinks when he's addressed, the piglin snorting at him and there's a level of seriousness in the tone and he furrows his brow, he's still not sure what the other is getting at. "I'm sorry dude, I don't know what you mean?"

The librarian sighs and moves to his lectern, reaching towards the cluttered shelves behind, stuffed with books, scrolls and ink bottles. He tugs out a scroll, protected by a thin sheet of leather. Sarnap and his husband move closer as the piglin unrolls the scroll across the lectern, it's a sketched diagram of two portals, one in the Nether and the other in the Overworld. A ribbon of red ink connects them and the librarian taps a claw on the ribbon, trailing his finger from the Nether to the Overworld.

"Yeah, we have to go through the portal right?" Sarnap tilts his head a little, just a tad perplexed. He does know that much at least, he had come through a portal himself to get here. He jolts when there's a pat on his shoulder and he turns a little to find his husband tugging his journal from his pocket and flipping to a blank page. The piglin offers him a brief fond glance, his lips tugging up into a smile around his tusks, and Sarnap can't help grinning back.

His husband offers the book and his pen to the librarian with a few explanative snorts and the other piglin offers Sarnap an amused glance, a huffed laugh all the human gets before the piglin is scribbling in the book. "Hey, I'm not dumb you know?" Sarnap can't help blurting out and he receives a raised brow.

Finally the book is set down on the lectern on top of the scroll and a claw taps, indicating he should read. Sarnap moves closer, the librarian's writing is looped and neat, carefully laid out in the book in thick paragraphs. His husband's writing tends to be a little more limited as he doesn't know every word in the Overworld's common speech, but Sarnap doesn't mind. He blinks and reads.

"This is old magic, from an ancient time that we do not speak of. Some of that time is lost to us, it

was a darker age. We were more violent and ruthless then, and the first humans we encountered likely had a hand in bringing us through the doorways for their own purposes.

Most of the potion ingredients come from the Overworld, it is debatable if they are all safe to use and ingest. It is very likely that our Leader will wish you to accompany your friends to your world to gather them and return. You are the first human who has truly endeared yourself to us and become one of us, for better or for worse, you have gained our trust.

I do not know if you will require more magic to bring all of these ingredients back to this world? You will also need more than for just one piglin, as our Leader would likely never allow one of us to visit there alone. He has regrettably not had a good experience with humans in the past.”

Sapnap looks up from reading, turning to the librarian before passing the book for his husband to read, though he's sure the other piglin has been informing him in words. “So you're saying I need to go, if the Leader dude will let me, because he trusts me?” There's a small bubble of warmth in his chest, he'd kinda figured the mob had come to trust him (especially from their reaction to his friend's arrival), but it was still nice to have it affirmed aloud.

His husband huffs out a breath that tickles the back of his neck and Sapnap turns to him, the piglin looks worried, eyes darting between the portal drawings and words scrawled in the journal. He studies Sapnap for a long moment, his eyes oddly searching and then he snorts to the librarian, holding out his hand. The other piglin passes him his pen before stepping away a moment, as though to give them a little privacy.

His husband flips the page of the book and holds it carefully as he writes, a slightly-messy sentence that he offers Sapnap with a worried frown.

“You will come back?”

His heart clenches, his stomach dropping and for a moment all he can think is “*oh*”. He meets his husband's gaze and the worry there, mixed with a desperate pleading, makes him want to wrap his arms around the piglin. He thinks he's not going to come back... that Sapnap would just up and disappear with his friends...

And maybe a few weeks ago he'd have been right, Sapnap would have gone with Dream and George, only feeling a little guilty. He finds himself moving closer, hands reaching up to tug the piglin down a little, and his husband allows it, following his lead. Sapnap nuzzles the piglin's snout softly, and the small flustered sound his husband makes has a bubble of Joy welling up inside him. “Yeah dude, of course I'd come back. I wouldn't dream of just leaving.”

A clawed thumb strokes over his cheek and his husband pulls back just a little, his eyes soft. It's the same look the piglin gets whenever he's about to kiss him and Sapnap feels his stomach flutter in anticipation-

The librarian coughs pointedly and Sapnap offers him a glare, before pressing a little chaste kiss to his husband's lips in defiance. His husband strokes his cheek and gives one of his snorting laughs, Sapnap joining in.

Sapnap stretches, yawning and enjoying the soft silence of the room, only the crackle of the torches and the distant sounds of the day to day of the Bastion breaking the silence. He was being lazy, having pouted and groaned when the morning bell had rung, refusing to leave to comfort of their hammock. His husband had snorted at him in amusement, reluctantly rolling out himself. Sapnap had watched him, murmuring that he should come back to bed which was rewarded with more huffed laughter and the piglin leaning over to kiss him.

It was a brief kiss, but Sapnap couldn't help leaning up to chase it with a soft wanting sound, and he had been very aware of the flush across his husband's cheeks when he pulled back. The piglin's clawed fingers dug into the thick leather of his work apron and for a moment his eyes had roamed over Sapnap's body, making him almost shiver. Then he'd jerked his head towards the door and the other piglins filing through it with an almost guilty expression.

Sapnap had offered a weak wave, practically hiding in the hammock as his husband hurried out, only casting one last glance at him. He couldn't read the piglin's expression fully but his heart had been racing. Eventually he'd fallen back to sleep, warm and comfortable with the scent of the piglin all around him.

Now though, he's not tired at all, his mind rolling over the events of the last few days. After their talk with the librarian, Sapnap had discussed the idea of visiting the surface with his friends and they had had a meeting with the elder leader. The older piglin had appeared apprehensive of the plans and it had taken a while to be convinced. Even when convinced that Sapnap, Dream and George would indeed return from the initial venture, he was suspicious about the notion of Sapnap's husband visiting the Overworld.

After a while they had struck up a deal, Sapnap would gather enough supplies and potion ingredients for not just his husband, but also a small group of brutes to accompany them. It was understandable from the leader's perspective, he knew little of the Overworld and considering how

dangerous the Nether was, Sapnap could understand why he was wary of just letting one of the mob visit without any protection. Dream and George had offered to mine their way back to their portal, a lengthy and taxing plan, but much more safe than navigating through the Nether past the lakes of lava, ghasts and other hostile mobs.

He was worried about his friends, they'd left the day before with supplies and two shiny new blackstone pickaxes. Sapnap knew that they were both fully capable out there but still, the Nether was a terrifying place at the best of times.

It was odd too, not having them around suddenly once more, he'd gotten used to their laughter and jokes and occasionally (more than occasionally) accidentally making him a third-wheel with their flirting or light-hearted arguments. Sapnap didn't mind though, he was starting to get it, he and his husband practically had inside-jokes at this point, and the piglin would give him this *look* when George and Dream started arguing and they'd both start wheezing.

Thinking of his husband reminds him of that morning and he shivers again, remembering that brief press of lips and the piglin's intense stare. Sapnap swallows and sinks back into the hammock, almost unconsciously sniffing to catch the scent of the piglin. He wants his husband, ever since his confession and those desperate kisses and the barest taste of those hands on him he's been thinking about it.

And this is.. the first time since that day that he's been fully alone. Sapnap ponders, eyes darting to the door, his ears straining. He can't hear anyone, and from the last few times he'd lazed the day away or spent time in the sleeping chambers, it's rare for any of the mob to return. He looks down at himself and remembers the feel of his husband's mouth, of his hungry glances.

Sapnap casts another glance at the doorway, teeth digging into his lower lip. And then he tugs up the tunic, the rustle of the fabric so loud in the silence of the room. He lets himself relax back into the hammock, taking a shuddery breath. Oh damn he's really going to do this... The feel of his bare palm on his stomach has him shivering and he can't help closing his eyes, inhaling and taking in the combined scent of his husband and himself that permeates the hide of the hammock.

Sapnap slides his hand lower, below the waistband of his pants. In his mind he imagines a larger clawed hand wrapping around him, his husband straddling him and gazing down with one of *those looks*. He feels like the piglin would be incredibly gentle with him, he's almost too-careful with him, sometimes Sapnap wants the piglin to get more rough...

The first brush of his fingers has him gasping and he wraps his fingers around his cock. It's a shock, he hasn't touched himself since being brought to the Bastion. He can't bite back a low groan as he jerks his hand, the press of his palm hot and familiar and *so good*. Sapnap wonders how his husband's fingers would feel, his hands are bigger and a little calloused from his smithing

work.

The piglin is good with his hands, Sarnap closes his eyes and parts his lips, remembering the taste, the feel of his husband's mouth. His free hand tangles into his hair, already ruffled from sleep, before gravitating almost on instinct to his ear and the gold ring there. Almost on a whim he tugs on the ring a little, digging his nails into the flesh as he imagines his husband nipping at his ear. The desperate sound that escapes him is too loud but he can't stop, just arches his back and moves his hand faster.

The pleasure rolls through him like a wave of heat, crashing through his body, he's getting so close already. Behind his eyelids, clenched shut as he bucks into his fist, he pictures his husband kissing down his neck, the brush of the tusks a reminder how easily the piglin could bite into him, mark him so everyone can see. A sudden thought of that mouth and snout pressing little kisses down his chest, down his stomach towards his cock has him whimpering and he feels himself drawn ever closer to the edge.

There's a sudden thud across the room and a surprised squeal and Sarnap starts, eyes opening and his hand pausing on his cock as he takes in the piglin standing in the doorway, eyes wide as they take him in. It's the smaller piglin with the brute husband, and somewhere in the back of his mind he thinks hysterically that the tables have turned.

He's frozen, any arousal he was feeling swiftly turning to ice in his stomach, an almost nauseous feeling of mortification and shame. And he's incredibly aware that he can't move, his fingers still wrapped around himself and he moves to hastily cover himself, fabric rustling as he tugs up his pants and tugs down the tunic, his face burning in embarrassment. When he looks up again he finds the piglin has disappeared, the doorway empty once more. Sarnap groans mournfully and presses his hands to his face. He doesn't think he's ever been more mortified in his life.

He lays there for a long time, rubbing his hand over his eyes and wishing the floor would open up and swallow him whole. He's debating if he should get up and try to distract himself with something, or maybe go and hide somewhere remote in the Bastion so he's never seen again when his ears register the soft thuds, getting louder in the hallway. Sarnap sits up, as much as one can in a hammock, eyes wide as the footsteps, so quick the person must be sprinting, get closer.

He's not prepared for his husband to fly through the doorway, panting hard and eyes searching the room. He's still wearing his leather apron and gloves and there's smears of dust on his face and the bare skin of his arms, he's run straight from the forge. Sarnap opens his mouth but the look in the piglin's eyes makes his throat dry and he feels incredibly small as his husband approaches their hammock. His eyes are freely roaming Sarnap's body, and he has to suppress a shiver when he notices the piglin's nostrils flaring a little, like he's scenting him.

Gloved hands take hold of him and he can't help the tiny embarrassing yelp as he's jerked up into the piglin's arms, held against his chest possessively. A snout buries itself in his hair, sniffing and nuzzling, sending a shiver through him. A growl rumbles through his husband's chest and the piglin snorts his name, the tone wanting and Sapnap can't help but just cling onto the other, letting himself be carried.

"Where are we going?" he's shaking, his knuckles no doubt turning white from how hard he's clutching onto the leather of the piglin's tunic. His cheeks are flushed and he feels his stomach coiling with heat and anticipation, Sapnap suspects he knows exactly where his husband is carrying him and he hopes he's right.

He receives another low growl and a nip at his ear that has him gasping, and all he can do is hold on as his husband lugs him effortlessly out of the sleeping chambers and down the hallway.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

****Smut chapter, if you would like me to add any more tags let me know!***

Thank you all for your wonderful comments, kudos and bookmarks, hope you're all having a wonderful day! <3

-- Edit 11/07/21 --

Hey, I wanted to apologize, I wasn't sure exactly what people would need tagged and how they would need it tagged and I know there were specific kinks in the sexual chapter that may have been uncomfortable for people. I will do better with tagging. For anyone confused the piglins are intersex and have both sets of 'equipment', I'm a trans guy and like exploring gender in my fics. If people need a 'possible dysphoria triggering' tag please let me know, I will add it!

Sapnap attempts to ignore the stares they're getting, many of them very knowing in a way that's mortifying. The Bastion is busy with activity at this time of day, which is both a curse and a slight blessing, while they're noticed by many piglins with amusement, the mob are too busy to stare for long, swiftly going back to their professions and tasks of the day. His husband's stride is determined, the piglin hurrying and all Sapnap can do is cling to him, his body thrumming with nerves and anticipation.

Heat flashes through his cheeks when they finally get to a familiar door, tucked away and seeming to beckon them as his husband makes his way down the hallway. The piglin's bravado seems to waiver when they're through the door however, his hands shaking just a little as he lowers Sapnap onto his feet. His husband swallows and busies himself with closing the door and Sapnap distracts himself from his nerves for a moment by taking in the chamber.

He'd not noticed everything before, the pile of soft hoglin hides is still there of course, but for the first time he notices further in the room is a set of shelves and an iron cauldron. The shelves are full of clean hides, folded leather cloths and a selection of potion bottles. Some have the familiar glowing purple, healing potions, and others are a clearer liquid, sparkling just a little in the candle light.

There's a soft snort from behind him, practically a whisper and Sapnap turns to find his husband wringing his hands nervously. Sapnap swallows and then he offers the piglin a reassuring smile, hands reaching for his. "Hey," he notices, not for the first time, how the piglin's large clawed hands seem to dwarf his own. Sapnap's voice comes out a little rougher, "you okay?" He should be saying more, there must be a reason the piglin is so worried.

His husband nods, letting out a shaky exhale and he lets go of Sapnap's hands, reaching for his journal. His hands are shaking as he writes and there's an adorably flustered blush across his face when he offers the book. There's hesitance there, but also his ears are wiggling in a way that Sapnap has come to recognize as eager excitement.

He can't suppress the sudden needy sound that escapes his throat as he reads the short sentence. His fingers grip the paper, teeth digging into his bottom lip. For the second time that day a wave of heat rushes through him and all he can do is stare at the words for a long moment.

"I want to mate you and make you mine, please may I?"

Sapnap lets out a shuddering breath and nods, his face burning as he meets his husband's gaze, "yeah," his voice cracks on the word and the look in the piglin's eyes pins him in place, "please yeah I want you too, so bad. You don't even *know* -" a hot mouth cuts him off, a brief hard wet kiss that leaves them both panting.

His husband's hands dig into his shoulders and Sapnap swallows, letting the piglin push him backwards gently. He can't tear his gaze from the hungry look the other is giving him and he almost yelps when he's pushed down onto the pile of soft hides. His husband drops to his knees and Sapnap finds himself pressed back into the fur, hands wrapping around the other's shoulders as a mouth presses to his again. He's used to the slight messiness of their kisses, the snout and tusks a little bit of a challenge that he's more than happy to work with. He can't help melting under that hot mouth and tongue, letting out a soft moan as hands cup his cheeks.

For a long moment the both of them lost in one another, kisses becoming more desperate and drawing moans from the both of them, and then the piglin draws back and Sapnap whines at the loss. He'd be embarrassed at the needy sound, if he wasn't distracted by the shiver that runs down his spine at the look in his husband's eyes. They roam over his body ravenously as the piglin moves back. Sapnap swallows as his clawed hands delicately reach for his belt and suddenly that shyness is back, his husband flushing deeper and looking to him for permission.

He swallows, anticipation and heat rolling through him, his voice is soft as he whispers out a "yeah." Sapnap's hands slide down to help undo the buckle, fumbling a little in his nervous excitement. He watches his husband carefully stash the belt and gold buckle in his inventory and sits up a bit to tug his tunic over his head.

His hair flops in his face, dark strands brushing flushed cheeks and his husband seems to freeze for a moment, mouth agape as he stares down at him. Sapnap can't stop the shy grin that tugs at his lips, the piglin looks utterly captivated. His hands reach out to tug at the other's tunic. "Want to see you too," his fingers press to the angular gold buckle and he grins up at his husband, "please?"

His husband snorts almost shyly, cheeks flushing as he works open his belt and sets it aside, his own tunic joining Sapnap's on the floor with a soft thump. Sapnap swallows, eyes drinking in the sight of his chest, practically hairless in comparison to his own. He wants to touch, wants to play with those pierced nipples, the gold bars haunting his thoughts ever since the communal bath.

A claw brushes his cheek, featherlight, and he gasps as it travels downwards. His hands grip the furs beneath him, back arching a little as it leaves a trail of tingling heat from his throat, to his chest, the piglin's breathing heavy as he traces a line down the centre of his chest and follows the soft trail of hair down to his navel. "Oh *fuck* -" he reaches out, grabbing the piglin's hand and pressing the palm to his heated skin.

His husband growls and the sound sends a heady lick of heat through him, large hands sliding to explore his chest, clawed fingers so gentle as they curiously brush his nipples. He arches with a groan, feeling them harden and the piglin rolls them between thumb and forefinger, his gold pupils dilating with hunger as he watches Sapnap arch and gasp.

His husband takes his time exploring, reducing him to soft groans and panting breaths, abandoning his nipples almost regretfully to follow the trail of hair that leads down his stomach. There's curiosity there, his fingers almost petting in wonder, and Sapnap bites his lip when clawed fingers pause just below his navel, where his happy trail disappears into his pants. "You can take them off, if you want?" His voice is breathless, one of his own hands pressing to his husband's broader chest, sliding from collarbone to one pierced nipple, flicking at the bar curiously with his thumb and dragging a needy sound from the piglin's throat.

The piglin snorts softly, his claws hooking into both Sapnap's pants and underwear eagerly and he can't help the way his breath catches as the other pulls them down. Sapnap's cheeks burn, breath rough as his skin is exposed, a brief flash of bashfulness flashing through him before another needy growl rumbles through his husband's chest at the sight of him.

He lets out a breathy flustered laugh as they work together to clumsily get his boots and pants off, leaving him naked and unable to hide as the piglin presses him down again, eyes roaming over his body. Sapnap lets out a shaky breath, chest heaving as clawed fingers grip his thighs and coax him to spread his legs more.

Sapnap feels himself twitch between his legs as the piglin seems to devour him with his eyes. He feels vulnerable and at the other's mercy, the thought that his husband could do anything to him if he wanted sending flicks of heat through him and a whimper out of his mouth. His husband pants, tongue flicking one tusk briefly as his claws slide up Sapnap's thighs, clawed thumbs pressing into that crease that divides his thighs and his hips.

His fingers are so close, Sarnap groans and arches, just the thought of those hands on his cock has him breathless. His husband reaches out with one hand and then pauses, eyes meeting his. The piglin cocks his head, swallowing hard and he lets out a questioning snort. His fingers tremble like it's taking all his willpower not to touch.

Sarnap nods, one hand cupping the piglin's cheek and brushing the gold ring in his ear, "*fuck*, touch me please?" His husband lets out a shaky breath and his gaze moves back down to his cock and the curiosity and desire in the gold eyes has Sarnap biting his lip. The first touch is just a fingertip, rolling from the base to the tip, a teasing touch that has him moaning, hips bucking up in demand for more.

The piglin growls again and fingers brush over his balls with a curious little grunt, pressing below them for a brief moment and Sarnap notices the confused look on his husband's face as his fingertips press to his taint. He's not left much time to ponder on it though because the piglin's fingers soon trail back upwards to wrap around his cock and he ends up throwing his head back with a groan.

It's so good, his fingers feel so good. They're larger than his own and he's so careful as he strokes, the tiny brushes of his claws just adding to the sensation. Sarnap can't stop the needy sounds that keep escaping his throat and lips, his hands reaching up to wrap around the piglin's shoulders to tug him closer. Their lips meet messily, his mind becoming fluffy as his tongue brushes fangs and his husband moans into his mouth, his fingers moving faster, thumb rolling over the tip of his cock and making him whine.

Sarnap feels the heat building inside him, that familiar rise as he's dragged closer to the edge and he reluctantly pulls back with a ragged gasp. One hand slips between them to press to his husband's. "Wait-wait," his voice is rough, lips wet as he urges the piglin to stop. "Wait I.." he tries to catch his breath and his husband draws his hand back, but he catches his fingers and drags them up to his mouth.

The piglin lets out an actual whimper when he sucks on two of those fingers, eyes never leaving his husband's. He draws back, panting, "sorry just, I want you inside me," he swallows, flushing as the piglin's chest rumbles with a low growl and his voice comes out lower, just a whisper as he confesses, "*want you to mate me*."

His husband groans and rubs a thumb over his wet lips, and he grinds down between Sarnap's legs. A rough roll of his hips that has him gasping, feeling the piglin's clothed bulge rub against his cock. Then his husband draws back, almost regretfully and Sarnap can't help the confused whine, sitting up on his elbows as the comfortable warmth of the other's body leaves him. The piglin scoots back, and Sarnap can see his hand shaking a little as he reaches to the shelves, towards a bottle of clear potion.

He can't help snorting out his husband's name, body tingling and wanting. The piglin moves back towards the pile of hides and sets the bottle to the side, hungry gaze meeting Sarnap's as he hurriedly starts tugging off his leather shorts and boots. Sarnap swallows hard, eyes roaming over the piglin's body. He wants to explore his body, just map out every inch and see what makes his husband groan and gasp and fall to pieces in the best of ways.

The piglin crawls over to him again and he leans up to press their mouths together with a soft hum, his hand sliding down his husband's chest and pausing at his navel. "Can I?" his voice is just a murmur against the other's lips and he draws back to gauge the other's expression. "Is this okay?" he asks, just so he can be sure and he grins eagerly when the piglin swallows and nods, his cheeks blushing adorably.

Sarnap hasn't seen him fully, not here and he finds himself swallowing again, fingers hesitantly exploring. It's familiar, but also so different from his own body. The piglin's cock is tapered, almost curled at the tip like the sweet corkscrew tail he sports. It's a little redder than the rest of his body and seems to slip into some kind of sheath, covered with a tiny patch of coarse fur, at the base. Sarnap finds his own breathing becoming more ragged as his exploration reduces the piglin to pants and little low needy sounds.

His eyes widen when his fingertips reach the base and he nudges something slick and unexpected. He curiously probes behind the sheath, in the place where his own taint would be and he gasps as his fingers find soft slick folds and his husband whines and ruts into his hand. Sarnap bites his lip, gently pressing his fingers in, just briefly, watching the way his husband's eyes squeeze shut as he grinds into his hand.

He's so hard it hurts and he trails his slick fingers back up to cock, the piglin growling and moaning as he attempts to emulate how he'd touch himself. It's thicker than his own, his thumb and fingers unable to touch around it and that makes him twitch with want. He bucks up, his own cock brushing his husbands and leaving them both gasping. "Please, baby please."

The piglin reaches for the bottle and Sarnap notices hazily that the liquid inside is clinging to the glass, thicker and gooey like honey. The other moves back and motions for him to roll over with an eager little snort. A flicker of nervousness rolls through his stomach and Sarnap pauses, flushing and letting out a shaky little giggle. "Uh, I've never done this before," he cringes a little at himself, at the slight twinge of nerves.

The piglin pets his thigh and blushes, looking embarrassed and nods, fingers moving to tap his own chest in a rather unmistakeable 'me too' gesture, and the worry Sarnap feels melts a little. "You too huh?" he grins as his husband nods again with a soft huff and rolls over onto his stomach, glancing back at him, "go easy on me yeah?" his voice shakes a little and a hand pets his back

reassuringly.

The bottle is uncorked and Sapnap shivers, raising his ass and hiding his face in his arms. He feels incredibly exposed and still safe in the way only his husband manages to make him feel. The first brush of a slicked finger is unexpected and has him gasping, the liquid feeling cool despite being room temperature. The piglin is gentle, just rolling over his entrance softly, softly until he's rolling his hips back into it with a whine. And then the tip of this thick finger dips inside.

Sapnap lets out a choked sound into his arms, hair falling in his eyes. His husband takes it slowly, easing him into it. One finger sinking into him and curling, almost reaching something deep within that has a spark rushing through him. He chases the feeling, hips rocking back as a second finger is worked inside, the stretch almost too much at first and the piglin pauses as he trembles, clenching around them and trying to relax.

His husband snorts out his own version of his name, in a way that sounds so fond it has him melting. The fingers sink deeper and the piglin growls, tugging them out and Sapnap whines at the loss, and then they return, reslicked and stretching him and it's *so good* he's trembling all over. “*Fuck, fuck, fuck* -” he can't think, can't do anything but let out a sound like a pleading wail when a third finger works inside him.

He's so full, it should be too much but his husband is patient and careful. The piglin lets him adjust and then as soon as Sapnap's relaxed and pushing back for more, fucking his fingers in more firmly to force needy groans from his throat. He's almost crying when his husband pulls his fingers out, leaving his hole slick and twitching and desperately empty. “Please please,” he can't do anything but babble, thighs shaking as a thumb rolls over his entrance teasingly.

A wanting growl rumbles from behind him and Sapnap bites his lip when he hears the clinking again as it's set down. Hands grip his hips and he grips the hides beneath him, the fur tickling his cheek as he lets out a shuddering breath. The curled tip of the piglin's cock nudges against his well prepared hole and a choked noise escapes his throat as carefully, slowly his husband eases in. The piglin gasps, and he feels him tremble as his thick cock slowly sinks inside. He presses his sweat-slicked forehead against his arms, moaning as his husband presses deep, all the way to the base and then pauses, leaning over him and pressing his bare chest to Sapnap's back.

A shuddering groan and a rough exhale tickle his ear as the piglin moves to nuzzle the back of his neck, tusks and snout caressing the skin. Sapnap rolls his hips back, urging him to move and the tip of his cock pressing to a sweet spot inside him, making him moan. With a growl the piglin ruts into him, hips pressing deep inside him and Sapnap sees stars.

The world reduces to just this, the way their hips move together, the press of bare flesh and hard tusk and their groans and panting breaths intertwining. The building pleasure is intense, he's

surrounded by his husband's scent and touch and full of him and it feels so good. Sapnap feels a hand reach for his and interlace their fingers, the piglin nuzzling into his neck. It's so soft, it has his heart clenching with a deep fondness, even as he lets out a choked moan, feeling himself dragged over the edge.

He comes with a desperate sound, vision blurring for a moment as his whole body jerks. His husband bites into the flesh of his neck with a growl, hips becoming more rough and all Sapnap can do is take it, his oversensitive body twitching as the piglin chases his own completion, finally burying himself deep inside with a low cry. Sapnap whimpers as he feels his husband twitch inside him, and a rush of heat.

It doesn't stop, each twitch seeming to release another spurt and his legs almost give out, shaking as the piglin holds him and a fleeting thought that the other is *breeding* him has him flushing deeply, hiding his face. He can feel slickness escaping his overstuffed hole, dripping down his legs and he knows if he wasn't spent he'd be getting hard at that.

Finally his husband pulls back and Sapnap flops onto his side, panting and blearily looking down to find that his stomach is actually rounded just a little. He slides a shaky hand down to press on it and the piglin growls as the pressure forces some of his cum to gush out, all over Sapnap's thighs. Sapnap bites his lip, meeting his husband's gaze to find the piglin trembling himself and then the other is moving to lay next to him on the furs.

An arm wraps around his body and tugs him into a broad chest and Sapnap snuggles closer with a breathy giggle. He reaches out with a shaky hand, tugging the piglin into a soft, tired kiss. He feels exhausted, warm and melty and giddy, he could fall asleep right here. "I love you," he presses a tiny kiss to one tusk, "I love you, like a lot," he presses a few more featherlight kisses to his husband's snout for good measure, his panting breaths slowly calming as the piglin's hand pets his back.

The piglin snorts out a soft little laugh, hand reaching to tangle fingers into his hair. He nods at his words and nuzzles his snout into Sapnap's forehead. For a long moment they simply snuggle, and Sapnap feels sleep tug at him, feeling warm and comfortable and safe. His hand rolls down the piglin's back and he receives an adorable little squeak when he pets at the corkscrew tail. He yawns, closing his eyes and then ends up whining out a petulant "nooo," when his husband begins to draw back.

The piglin snorts out a little laugh and yawns himself, rubbing at his eyes. Sapnap pouts, trying to hook a leg around the other and keep him near. His husband laughs again, petting his head briefly before standing and making his way to the shelves again, a slight shakiness in his movements that reveals his own exhaustion.

Sapnap sits up reluctantly, watching as the piglin reaches for a cloth and dips it into the cauldron of clean water, wringing it out a little. He snags a potion of healing as he returns, kneeling down beside him once more. Sapnap flushes a little when the piglin gives a questioning snort and gestures between his legs, nodding and letting his husband reach down to clean him.

It's intimate in an entirely different way and makes him feel oddly vulnerable, the piglin very gently cleaning away cum and slick, and then inspecting his hole, seemingly worried he was hurt. Sapnap smiles shyly, his voice reassuring "I'm just a little sore, just a tiny bit, no worries." He holds out his hand for the cloth and enjoys the bashful look he receives as he does the same for his husband, softly cleaning him up in the same careful way he'd been treated.

He flings the cloth to the floor and practically climbs into the piglin's lap, ignoring that they're both still naked. His husband lets out a slightly shocked snort and wraps his arms around him instinctively. Sapnap nuzzles into his chest before leaning back, chin resting on warm skin, "Now I demand more cuddles bro."

He grins lazily when his husband rolls his eyes and laughs fondly, rolling so they're laying on the pile of furs again.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

So uh... I know it's been like 9 months... I'm so sorry for that everyone. Hope you're all doing well and thank you so much for your patience and support.

Time passes far too quickly for Sapnap's liking, with Dream and George bursting back into the Bastion, dusty from mining through the netherrack and demanding his attention. Sapnap wishes that time could have paused for a little, he would have been perfectly happy lost in soft hoglin hides, aware of barely anything but his husband's heartbeat, the piglin's breaths tickling his hair, and the press of their warm bodies.

Still, he's happy to see his friends back safe and sound, and he knows it's probably obvious how giddy he is. He can't seem to stop smiling as they sit at dinner over bowls of stew. He struggles to pay attention when they talk about their woes, how they were hounded by hoglins and got lost twice. He's too busy catching his husband's gaze across the table and winking to make him blush.

George interrupts Sapnap while he's trying to sneakily hook his foot around his husband's booted ankle in a clumsy attempt at playing footsie. The brunet coughs pointedly, making Sapnap blush, and lays out a roughly sketched out map across the table, illustrating the route between the Bastion and their portal.

"So, we started here and then had to go around because of lava, and then down here because of the magma cubes." George traces the path with two of his fingers, adjusting his goggles on his nose a moment. "It's going to be a pain in the ass to haul back supplies all that way, but not impossible."

Sapnap groans, anguished at the thought of lugging back heavy sacks of ingredients, almost flopping back before remembering he's on a bench. His eyes widen as he loses balance for a moment, and he gives an embarrassing squawk, gripping the edge of the table. All three of them, including his husband (*traitor!*) laugh at his misfortune before turning back to the map.

The piglin presses a claw to the drawing of the portal and tugs his little notebook out of his pocket. He snorts softly as he writes and sets it down. Dream cranes his neck and haltingly reads out the question, "what potion ingredients will you need from the Overworld?"

George tugs a list from his pocket, lifting his goggles to read it aloud, "uh, so first we brew a fire resistance potion, and we should be able to get all that here, since it's water, magma cream and

nether wart...” the brunet waits for the piglin to nod in understanding before frowning down at the paper. “Then we need to reverse that and add one unique ingredient. Reversing it requires a spider eye, and that needs to be fermented, so we’ve also got to get sugar and brown mushrooms.”

The piglin tilts his head with an inquisitive snort, he scribbles in his notebook, “spydor eye?” He looks at them baffled, and Sapnap leans over, patting his fingers for the pen. His husband allows him to take it with a fond look.

Sapnap doodles a childish rendition of a spider on the page, which really isn’t all that good or informative. “It’s a creature from the Overworld, they usually attack you at night or in caves. They’ve got a lot of legs.”

George fixes him with an unimpressed stare, “your descriptions are riveting Sapnap, so helpful and educational.” His monotone oozes sarcasm and Sapnap sticks his tongue out at him.

Dream laughs, one of his green hoodie strings hanging from the corner of his mouth, “he’s not exactly wrong though. They’re a hostile creature you can find in the Overworld and when you kill one you have a chance at retrieving an eye. We’ll need a fair few eyes for multiple batches of potion, but me and George can handle that... we’ll probably need to find a spawner. Sapnap can help get the sugarcane, mushrooms and- wait, I wanted to ask you something.”

Dream turns to the piglin and reaches out to pat his shoulder, “me and George kind of struggle pronouncing your name, we were wondering if we could give you an Overworld nickname for the time being? Since we’ll be talking a lot more it feels rude not to have a name for you?”

The piglin blinks down at him before glancing at Sapnap and then George. He shrugs, letting out an affirming snort. Sapnap frowns a little, he glances between his friends, a nagging worry they’ll try and call the piglin something mean as a joke.

“We were thinking something like Elijah? It sounds a bit like your real name, if that’s okay with you?” Dream tilts his head with a friendly smile and Sapnap lets himself relax, he needn’t have worried.

His husband seems to ponder on it for a moment, his bitten ear flicking and then he offers Dream a nod and a firm thumbs up.

Sapnap laughs and leans into his side. “Elijah huh? You sure you’re okay with that-?” he snorts out

his husband's name, tilting his head to peer up at the piglin's jaw. He smiles at the fond look he gets in response. His husband flicks at the gold ring in his ear very gently, leaning down to rub his snout against Sapnap's nose.

"George," Dream's voice is hushed, as though he's trying to be discreet. Sapnap glances at him and sees he's dragged George closer by his sleeve, leaning in close to his ear. "Can we get piglin-married with piercings? It's cute! Look how cute it is!" He gestures over to where Sapnap has his arm around his husband's waist.

George offers him a deadpan look, "I don't want to get my ears pierced Dream." He seems almost bemused, glancing over at them before turning back to his boyfriend.

Dream's face falls, expression twisting into something resembling a sad little puppy, "but *George* ..." he tugs the brunet closer, and his voice falls to a whisper. Sapnap only has a moment to take notice of the mischievous smirk clinging to his lips before Dream adds, "there's other most... discreet, places we could pierce you know."

"Dream, I swear to God!" George shoves him backwards and Dream lets out a yell as his arms pinwheel. He lands on the floor with a thud and an 'oof' and George decidedly ignores him, going back to his place at the table.

Dream rubs his back, giving the brunet those same hurt puppy-dog eyes, clambering awkwardly back onto his place. "Nipples George, I meant nipples. And you're mean!"

George just leans over to grab his mug of water, "maybe me and Sapnap should swap husbands."

Sapnap has his face practically buried in the piglin's tunic, choking on his laughter when he notices his husband stiffening. A clawed hand grips his side protectively and he leans back he discovers the piglin looking over at his friends with an almost inscrutable expression. He takes in the twitching of his ears, the tenseness of his shoulders and puts two and two together.

Sapnap rubs his husband's shoulder comfortingly, "sorry George this guy's mine," he leans up to kiss the piglin's cheek. He lets out a laugh and pokes his tongue out at his friends childishly, still leaning heavily into his husband, "plus he's hotter and smarter than both of you put together!"

His husband huffs out an exasperated laugh when they descend into a round of childish teasing, the map lying forgotten across the table.

Sapnap notices his husband's temperament change as the days go on. His friends and he bicker good-naturedly about their plans and gather provisions for the trip through the Nether (and a little extra in case of it being night when they arrive in the Overworld). His husband squeezes his hand tighter than usual.

Sapnap barter with the fletchers, offering to clean and repair the archery range in exchange for a new quiver of arrows. The arrows are sturdy, and very sharp (his loud "ow!" followed by him hastily stuffing his cut finger in his mouth had them laughing). The leather quiver is beautifully crafted and the strap is just the right length for him and Sapnap thanks them graciously, embarrassedly hiding his still bleeding finger in his pocket.

His husband gives him a strained smile when the piglin finds him in the sleeping quarters, polishing the leather quiver with hoglin tallow. Sapnap opens his mouth to greet him and the words catch in his throat when his husband abruptly sits on the floor in front of him, cross-legged. The position leaves Sapnap taller for once, looking down in bewilderment from his perch on their chest. His hand stills, fat-soaked rag still pressed to the quiver in his other hand.

The piglin taps on his knees briefly as his gold pupils bore into Sapnap's and then he looks down, struggling to tug his notebook from his pocket. His ears are twitching as he writes, words a little messier than usual in his haste. He looks up, eyes darting from the quiver to Sapnap's face and he clings to the book, looking torn.

"What's going on bro?" Sapnap tilts his head a little, the tie of his headband brushing his ear. His stomach churns, he doesn't like how worried the piglin looks.

His husband huffs out a breath, a deep sigh and holds the book up. His eyes dart to the side, almost guiltily as Sapnap reads.

"You are not coming back I fear"

Sapnap drops the quiver and rag onto the nearby chest and hurriedly wipes his hands on his pants. "Hey, hey," he surges forwards, ending up in a crouch in front of the piglin, squished a little between him and the wood of the chest. "Hey," he repeats, voice soft as he lowers the book, hands on the piglin's. "Of course I'm coming back. I said I would, didn't I?" He offers the other a reassuring smile.

His husband's snout twitches, his eyes staring off somewhere beyond Sapnap's shoulder and he gently, but firmly, takes his hands back. The pen scribbles across the page hurriedly before it's twisted around towards him. A soft choked snort escapes from the piglin's throat.

"Overworld is home... your home... you will see your trees, your oshun, your sky... you might like more than this, you might... forget"

The unspoken 'you might forget *me*' is obvious. His husband's eyes refuse to meet his, fixated down somewhere in the vicinity of his lap and the notebook held there. Sapnap swallows and reaches out, cupping the piglin's cheeks. He gently urges his husband to raise his head. The piglin's ears droop dejectedly as their eyes meet.

"I.." Sapnap starts, and then he pauses, not knowing what to say. He doesn't want to leave forever, he knows that much. The piglin blinks slowly and he leans close, pressing their foreheads together. A deep sigh is huffed out, puffing hot against his skin. Larger hands press to his and stay there, the piglin's eyes squeezed shut.

Sapnap swallows, he knows he doesn't want to leave forever. He's been considering and reflecting for weeks, more than he's ever done in his life. The Overworld is beautiful, it's ever changing and diverse, and he could travel for years and he could only glimpse just a fraction of its wonders.

But *this* is home. His husband is home. He lets out a shaky little overwhelmed laugh, realizing he does know what he wants, he's just been too stupid to admit it. Sapnap rubs his nose against the piglin's snout, heart pounding. "I want to stay here with you, like forever," he opens his eyes as the other pulls back, eyes wide and snout twitching. Sapnap rolls a thumb over the gold earring, his husband leaning into the touch. "I... this is fuckin' dumb but, I wanted to take you to see the surface just once, just in case I never go back, you know?"

Sapnap's kind of expecting the silence, cringing a little at his own words and how dumb they sound. He's not expecting the press of his husband's palms to his jaw and he lets out a surprised noise as he's pulled into a kiss. It's rough, a raw passionate thing that leaves him gasping.

The piglin pulls back and snorts, a little breathless, a hopeful questioning sound. On seeing Sapnap doesn't understand he grumbles exasperatedly and scratches something in his notebook. When he holds it up, a claw pressing to it urgently, Sapnap sees it's just three words.

"Stay with me?"

“Yeah,” his voice wobbles and he presses a hard kiss to his husband’s lips. “Yeah, I’m gonna stay with you.” The overjoyed snort the piglin lets out has him dragging his husband right back into another kiss.

There’s probably some rule against making out on the sleeping quarters floor but as the piglin’s mouth sucks hard on his neck, making him whine and groan, Sapnap decides he *really* doesn’t care.

Later, his bandana and clothes rearranged so he looks just a tad bit more presentable, Sapnap finds himself outside the Leader’s study. With both hands stuffed in his pockets, he rocks on his heels and contemplates the heavy door. Then he takes a deep breath to steady himself and takes hold of the doorknob.

He’s never been alone with the Leader before. It’s quiet in the elder piglin’s study, the quiet only broken by the muffled sound of lava flowing beyond the blackstone and the scratch of his pen across crisp parchment. And the piglin’s soft, seemingly unconscious snorts as he reads and scratches behind one ear, regarding the paper wearily.

“What are you working on?” Sapnap flops down in the seat opposite the Leader and the elder piglin raises his head slowly, regarding him with an exasperated expression. Sapnap can tell there’s amusement there too, a fondness in those gold pupils so he just grins and leans closer, half over the table. A clawed finger pokes him pointedly in the forehead and he yelps, jerking back and pressing a palm protectively over the spot.

The Leader snorts out a laugh before huffing a breath and twisting the parchment so he can see. Sapnap rubs his face with a surprised chuckle of his own and reads. It’s a report on resources, requests from around the Bastion for materials and items. He lets out a breath, “oh damn, that’s a lot of requests, how do you even keep track?”

The Leader snorts and runs clawed fingers over his head, looking exhausted as he snorts in tired amusement. He pats a pile of parchments on the table, stacked high, no doubt more planning and organization. Sapnap feels his eyes widen, shaking his head. He’s never been too good at planning, his friends have often said he rushes into things, and he often forgets to plan ahead, sometimes coming up short on materials when he’s in a jam.

He studies the parchment again, rereading the list of trades, thinking about the shared work of the Bastion between everyone; cooking, cleaning, gathering and hunting, and child rearing. “I don’t really have a trade,” he starts hesitantly, glancing up to find the Leader’s eyes on him, wizened features scrutinizing. Sapnap lets out an awkward sound, an odd almost-laugh. “Everybody seems to have something to do here...” He trails off, nervously fiddling with the corner of the parchment.

The elder piglin urges him on with a soft snort, clawed fingers dipping the pen into the inkpot, the bottle clinking loud in the quiet. Sapnap swallows his nerves, tapping on the table, “if I-” he takes a breath, passing the parchment back. “If I wanted to stay, would that be okay? If I wasn’t like... *good* at things, if I needed to learn stuff?”

He feels his stomach twist anxiously, eyes roaming from the clawed fingers gently taking the parchment, deeply wrinkled with age, up to the piglin’s face. His eyes are kind, lips quirking up into a smile behind his tusks. He opens a drawer in the table, extracting a clean sheet of parchment. Sapnap waits in anticipation as he taps out the excess of ink from the pen before writing. Each letter is carefully looped, ever so unlike Sapnap’s own spider scrawl.

He thinks of his husband’s writing, almost as neat but prone to getting messier when he was feeling passionate about the subject. Or after Sapnap’s just kissed him, Sapnap rather loves doing that, flustering him and then casually asking for clarification on something, watching as he blushes from his cheeks to his floppy ears, and his larger fingers shaking as he writes. His chest swells with something fond, warm and full of longing.

The Leader lets out a gentle snort and passes the parchment to him, claws careful not to catch on his smaller hands. Sapnap huffs out a small “thanks,” before he settles back on the chair to read.

“ Human, you have proven yourself far beyond anything I could have foreseen in the short time you have lived with our tribe. You have been kind, you have shown respect and a desire to learn, a willingness to learn our language and ways. I have seen you show loyalty, I have seen you show devotion and care to your husband. I have seen you protect our young ones. You have shown courage beyond most. You have more knowledge and skill than you allow yourself to believe. You have a home here, we will welcome you with open arms as one of our own, should you wish for it.”

Sapnap swallows, wholly unprepared for the emotions that bubble up within him in the wake of the words. His throat feels tight, a hot sting welling up in his eyes. He’s the klutz of their group, the hothead, the one who manages to simultaneously lag behind or rush in too fast. To see his good qualities laid out in front of him, it makes him feel *seen*. “I-” Sapnap’s shocked by how choked his voice sounds, “I, thanks man, I would like that.. I would love that actually.”

He wants to try and articulate how truly grateful he is but he can barely think straight. He laughs, wiping at his eyes, trying to hide the tears that are smeared across the back of his hand even as they

catch the torchlight. A hand presses to his shoulder, petting reassuringly and he meets the elder piglin's gaze. "I already uh..." he blurts out a laugh, "I kind of already told-" he snorts his husband's name, "-that I was gonna stay... so it would have been a bit awkward if I wasn't allowed to!"

The elder piglin snorts out a deep laugh and ruffles his hair. He scribbles something on a scrap piece of parchment.

"You are a very odd human."

And that has Sarnap laughing even more.

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